This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

THE WAR
McLAREN
ASQUITH, M.P.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
LIBRARIES

# WOMEN OF THE WAR

*All profits derived from the sale of this volume will be given to the joint War Committee of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John.*

# WOMEN OF THE WAR

BY

BARBARA McLAREN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

THE RIGHT HON. H. H. ASQUITH, M.P.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO
MCMXVII

D639
W7M27

# INTRODUCTION

I HAVE read this volume with an interest which I feel confident will be widely shared by the English-speaking public. Its simple and unexaggerated account of the varied fields of work which have enlisted, during the last three years, the energies and efforts of women of our race, forms a unique chapter in the annals of war.

Looked at as a whole, these narratives are as good evidence as could be found of the depth and universality of the appeal which the war has made to our women, not only for sympathy but for service. For the first time it has taught us as a nation to realise how large and how decisive is the part that can be played in a world-wide contest by those who are prevented from taking a place in the actual fighting line. There is no question here of any form of compulsion. The services and sacrifices which are described in these pages were given and suffered spontaneously by volunteers. That they should have been on such a scale, covering such wide and diverse activities, and shared in by women of every class and of so many types of special or general capacity, is a speaking tribute, not only to the quickened sense of national duty, but to the commanding and irresistible authority of a great cause.

Hardly less remarkable is the testimony which this book affords to the versatility, one might say the inventiveness, displayed in the share which women have contributed to the general stock of patriotic effort. They have done and are doing things which, before the war, most of us would have said were both foreign to their nature and beyond their physical capacity. It would be invidious to discriminate, but anyone turning over these pages will find abundant illustrations. Nor can it be doubted that these experiences and achievements will, when the war is over, have a permanent effect upon both the statesman's and the economist's conception of the powers and functions of women in the reconstructed world.

But I must leave the book to speak for itself and teach its own lessons. It does not profess to be an exhaustive account of women's work in the war. It is content with the more modest task of selecting and describing some typical cases. I know the scrupulous care with which it has been prepared, and I heartily commend it, not only as a trustworthy and uncoloured delineation of actual fact, but as a message of stimulus and inspiration to us all.

H. H. ASQUITH.

# PREFACE

THESE accounts of the work of some British women during the war have been collected, not with any attempt at even outlining the scope of women's achievement, but simply as pictures, showing the influence which women in varied spheres have exercised in the course of the war. Some of those whose records follow are women who, by force of character and personality, would always have stood apart, even in the limited opportunities of peace time. Others are taken rather as types of workers, representing many hundreds who are serving the country in similar ways. The selection has seemed at times invidious; but it is easy to realise that when the numbers of workers are so immense in each of the fields of activity mentioned in the book, no complete record of individual effort can be attempted.

The object in writing of the experiences of particular workers is to present a more vivid story than a merely general description could convey. True understanding of our women's war work can come only from personal experience or through the power of a keen imagination. Those who have no other opportunities can appreciate that work by visualising the measure of endurance, patience, determination, and unflinching courage demanded for the successful

performance of the tasks which women have undertaken. If any of these chapters succeed in creating a living atmosphere in which readers picture themselves working under similar conditions in similar fields of labour, the primary object of the book will have been fulfilled. Much will be written hereafter on every form of women's service touched on in these little accounts. They claim only to be windows through which may be seen that wide vista which has for its foreground the fulfilment of the great tasks of the war, and for its background a limitless horizon of potential effort.

B. McL.

*August* 4, 1917.

# CONTENTS


I. DR GARRETT ANDERSON, C.B.E., AND DR FLORA MURRAY, C.B.E.

PAGE

The first women doctors to manage a Military Hospital under the War Office. This hospital is entirely staffed by women . . 1

II. LADY PAGET, G.B.E.

Lady Paget took a hospital unit to Serbia when the typhus epidemic was raging there. She remained at Uskub with her staff after the invasion of Serbia, continuing her work during enemy occupation . . . . . 5

III. MISS LILIAN BARKER, C.B.E., AND MISS MABEL COTTERELL

Two outstanding Welfare Workers under the Ministry of Munitions. Miss Barker is Lady Superintendent at Woolwich, and Miss Cotterell at Gretna . . . . . 9

IV. MISS C. E. MATHESON AND THE VILLAGE LAND WORKERS

Miss Matheson has been working on the land for over two years, and has specialised in work with live stock . . . . . 14

V. DR ELSIE INGLIS

The founder of the Scottish Women's Hospitals. Dr Inglis has worked in Serbia, where she was taken prisoner. She is now serving in Rumania . . . . . 19

VI. MISS SPROT, THE MISSES PLAYFAIR, AND LADY BADEN-POWELL

Outstanding workers in the Y.M.C.A. Canteens in France. Lady Baden-Powell has started Boy Scout and Girl Guide Canteens . . 24

VII. MISS AGNES BORTHWICK

PAGE

Miss Borthwick is Works Manager in a big filling factory under the Ministry of Munitions. She is the first woman to hold this position in a Government factory . . . . . 29

VIII. MRS ST CLAIR STOBART

Mrs Stobart was with hospital units in Brussels, Antwerp, Cherbourg, and finally in Serbia, where, attached to the Serbian army with a field ambulance column, she accompanied the army in its heroic retreat . . . . . 32

IX. MISS E. G. BATHER AND MISS DOROTHY RAVENSCROFT

Two workers in charge of Remount Depôts for the War Office . 37

X. MISS EDITH STONEY AND DR FLORENCE STONEY

Two X-ray specialists. Miss Stoney is working X-rays in a hospital in Salonika; Dr Stoney is in a military hospital in London . . 41

XI. THE BARONESS DE T'SERCLAES AND MISS MAIRI CHISHOLM

These ladies have worked in Belgium since the beginning of the war, and are the only women allowed by the Belgian military authorities to be in the firing line . . . . . 47

XII. LADY MARY HAMILTON AND MISS DRUMMOND

Typical workers engaged on skilled processes in munition factories . 50

XIII. MRS FURSE, G.B.E., R.R.C., AND LADY PERROTT, R.R.C.

Mrs Furse's successful administration of the Women's Voluntary Aid Detachments has been an important factor in the organisation of their invaluable work. Lady Perrott's work, both before and during the war, has added greatly to the numbers and the efficiency of the Voluntary Aid Detachments . . . . . 55

XIV. COMMANDANT DAMER DAWSON AND MRS CARDEN

Commandant Damer Dawson has organised the Women Police. Mrs Carden has helped to organise Women Patrols . . . . 62

XV. MISS LENA ASHWELL, O.B.E.

PAGE

Miss Ashwell originated the Concert Parties at the front which have had such a stimulating influence. For over two years she has organised, developed, and financed the scheme on an ever-increasing scale . . . . . 67

XVI. MISS VIOLETTA THURSTAN

Since August 1914 Miss Thurstan has been nursing in Belgium and in Russia, where she was wounded in the trenches. She is now Matron at a great Belgian hospital . . . . . 73

XVII. H.R.H. PRINCESS BEATRICE, THE HON. LADY LAWLEY, G.B.E., AND THE COUNTESS OF GOSFORD

Workers in the various organisations of hospital supplies and comforts . . . . . 78

XVIII. MISS EDITH HOLDEN, R.R.C.

The Matron of a great base hospital . . . . . 86

XIX. MRS GASKELL, C.B.E., AND THE HON. MRS ANSTRUTHER

The organisers of the War Library and the Camps Library, which supply books to the Army and to the sick and wounded . . . . 91

XX. MISS LILIAN RUSSELL AND MISS ALICE BROWN

Workers for the Y.M.C.A. in France, who are managing hostels for the relations of the wounded . . . . . 98

XXI. MISS DOROTHY MATHEWS AND MISS URSULA WINSER

Miss Mathews is a typical agricultural worker, engaged in ploughing and heavy land work. Miss Winser drives an agricultural tractor . . . . . 102

XXII. MISS EVELYN LYNE AND MISS MADGE GREG

Two representative Voluntary Aid Detachment workers who have done canteen and rest-station work in France . . . . . 106

XXIII. MRS LEACH

PAGE

The head of the organisation of Army women-cooks . . . 110

XXIV. MRS GRAHAM JONES

A representative V.A.D. worker who has specialised in motor work. She went to France in charge of the first Women's Motor Ambulance Unit under the British Red Cross Society . . . . . 113

XXV. MISS GERTRUDE SHAW

Miss Shaw has specialised in the housing and canteen organisation for the Ministry of Munitions, and is now Chief Inspectress of Hostels and Canteens . . . . . 117

XXVI. MRS HARLEY

Mrs Harley worked for the Scottish Women's Hospitals from the outbreak of war, and was killed by a shell at Monastir in March 1917 while tending Serbian refugees . . . . . 120

XXVII. MISS ETHEL ROLFE AND THE WOMEN ACETYLENE WELDERS

Women engaged on a skilled process largely used in aeroplane construction . . . . . 124

XXVIII. LADY LUGARD

Lady Lugard helped to organise the War Refugees Committee for the reception and allocation of Belgian refugees . . . . . 129

XXIX. MISS CHRISTOBEL ELLIS

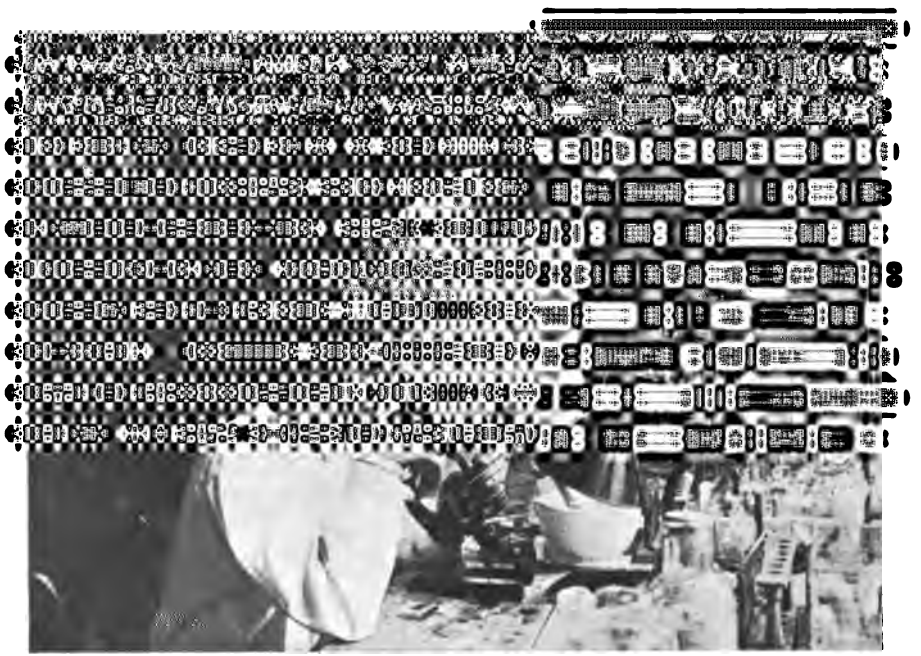
The head of the branch of the Women's Legion which organises women motor-drivers for the Army . . . . . 136

XXX. MADAME BRUNOT AND MISS MARION MOLE

These ladies lived in Cambrai under German rule for over two years, and did splendid work for wounded and prisoners . . 139

XXXI. SOME ARMY NURSES

Typical examples of nurses in various forms of hospital service . 143



*Alfieri.*

IN THE PATHOLOGY LABORATORY AT THE ENDELL STREET MILITARY HOSPITAL, LONDON.

# WOMEN OF THE WAR

## I

## DR GARRETT ANDERSON, C.B.E., AND DR FLORA MURRAY, C.B.E.

DR GARRETT ANDERSON and Dr Flora Murray have contributed one of the finest pages to the annals of women's work during the war, and by their success have greatly advanced the position of women in the medical world.

Dr Garrett Anderson was already a well-known surgeon, and Dr Flora Murray equally well known as a physician, in pre-war days, the former having qualified in 1897, and the latter in 1903. Dr Garrett Anderson is a daughter of Mrs Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, M.D., the first British medical woman.

During the month after the war broke out, Dr Garrett Anderson and Dr Flora Murray together organised a Voluntary Women's Hospital Unit, staffed by medical women, and offered their services to the French Red Cross. They established a hospital of 100 beds in Paris, at Claridge's Hotel, Champs Elysées, and it is notable that this was the first of the voluntary hospitals in Paris to start work in September 1914. Both British and French wounded were received and treated.

It was not long before the excellent work of these two doctors attracted very special attention, with the result that they were approached by the War Office, and asked to organise a hospital at Wimereux near Boulogne, attached to the Royal Army Medical Corps. This invitation was a considerable triumph, for it was the first time that medical women were officially singled out by the British Government and given equal responsibility with medical men.

The Army medical authorities were quick to realise how wisely their trust had been bestowed, and, in February 1915, Dr Garrett Anderson and Dr Flora Murray were asked to take up work on a larger scale, and to undertake the entire management of the Endell Street Hospital, a large military hospital in London.

During its two years of work for the sick and wounded, no military hospital has succeeded in establishing a finer record. To see it is a wonderful experience. The hospital consists of 17 wards, with 578 beds, and is entirely staffed by women—surgeons, doctors, pathologists, oculists, dental surgeons, anæsthetists, dispensers, nurses, orderlies. The only men are the patients.

Sir Alfred Keogh, the Director-General of the Army Medical Service, said, when speaking of it: "The hospital is in every respect a military hospital, differing in no way from any other military hospital in the country. Major operations comparable to those in any other institution are performed, and there is no limitation whatever, either medical or surgical, to the functions which the staff of the hospital undertakes. Particularly excellent work has been done in the pathological departments. A special

feature of the surgery of the hospital has been the adoption there of a new method of treating wounds, introduced by Professor Rutherford Morison."

This treatment consists of the use of a bismuth-iodoform-paraffin paste for cases of septic wounds and fractures. Writing of the treatment, Dr Garrett Anderson says: "In every case fœtor has disappeared, sepsis has subsided, and union of bone has taken place with astonishing rapidity, while the condition of the patient has benefited greatly from being spared painful daily dressings."

Set in the very centre of London, and surrounded by tall buildings, with the buzz and whirl of London traffic all about it, a visitor would be inclined at first to think the hospital a sad and gloomy place. But that impression soon passes, for in the wards, bright with colour, in the recreation room and library, but most of all in the faces of the soldier patients, happiness and contentment are the prevailing elements. An atmosphere is as hard to describe as it is easy to recognise, but the atmosphere of the Women's Hospital breathes rest and quiet, and the mutual confidence between patients and doctors which is so invaluable an asset in successful treatment.

Here, then, for the first time, it has been proved beyond all dispute, both to the medical profession and to the world outside, that women doctors and surgeons can equal the success of men in all branches of their calling, and not only with the ailments of women and children. The work that these women have proved themselves able to accomplish and to continue without sign of strain during three years of war ought at last to secure the recognition that it deserves. Dr Garrett Anderson and Dr Flora Murray

will feel that they have worked successfully, not only for their patients, but for medical women in general, if, as a result of their demonstration, the doors of the medical schools are thrown open to women. That the majority of medical women working for their country to-day have been forced to gain their knowledge and skill in the schools of the enemy is surely one of the conditions which the war will sweep away for ever.

*Hugh Cecil.* LADY PAGET, G.B.E.

*To face p.* 5.

## II

## LADY PAGET, G.B.E.

As a monument to human endurance and courage there can be no more wonderful record than that of Lady Paget's Hospital Unit in Serbia. The whole unit, several members of which were Americans, worked with a devotion and a loyalty unsurpassed during the war, but in Lady Paget they had a born leader, and a woman of indomitable heroism. At all the crucial moments, of which there were many, Lady Paget's wisdom, tact, foresight, and rapidity of decision saved the situation and enabled her hospital to render inestimable work to stricken Serbia.

Lady Paget, as wife of a former British Minister to Serbia, already possessed a wide experience of Balkan hospital work, having worked through the two Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913.

In November 1914, Lady Paget's Hospital Unit reached Uskub. This was one of the most critical phases for Serbia in the whole war. The Austrian invasion was at its height, and the Serbian armies, their ammunition exhausted, were being driven helplessly through the country before the enemy guns. Uskub was one of the main hospital bases, though the conditions there were of the roughest as regards sanitation and hospital equipment. As soon as Lady Paget's hospital could be hurriedly installed it was

filled to overflowing with wounded Serbian soldiers, and for three months the work was incessant. When the surgical work began to slacken, the great typhus epidemic swept over the country. The Serbians had no means of meeting it, and Lady Paget, with two doctors and two nurses, by superhuman labours prepared a great Typhus Colony at Uskub, Lady Paget herself undertaking the hardest menial work of scrubbing and cooking, and sparing herself no risk in washing and caring for the infected patients. By the labours of this gallant staff of five, and some Austrian prisoners working under them as orderlies, huge barracks were converted into hospital buildings and filled with hundreds of typhus-stricken soldiers within little over a week. Then Lady Paget herself caught the deadly fever, and for many days her life was despaired of. She was so much beloved throughout Serbia that her danger was felt as a national disaster, and the children of peasants in far-away places, where she was known only by name, were taught to pray for her daily, while in the synagogues a special day was set apart for prayers for her recovery.

In the spring, before Lady Paget was fully restored to health, she returned to England to prepare for further work, and in July 1915 she again went to Serbia. She returned to her previous headquarters at Uskub and reorganised her staff, and during August and September the hospital was continuously full.

About the middle of October the storm of invasion again broke over the unhappy little country, and, while the German and Austrian armies swept down from the north, the Bulgarians poured in from the east. It was at this point that Lady Paget had one

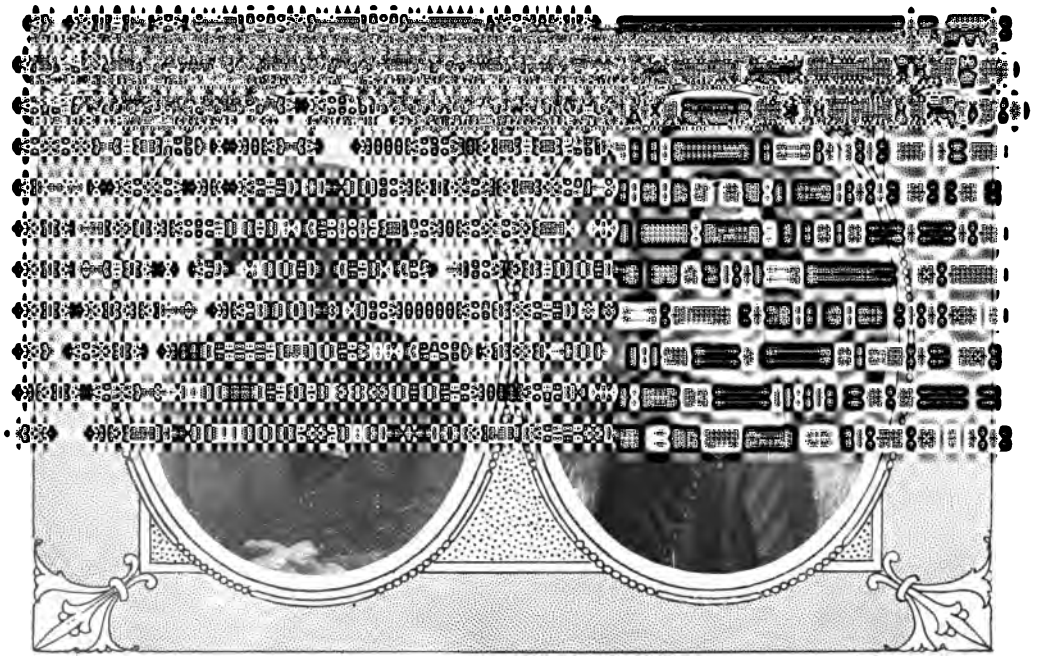
of her most momentous decisions to make. The Serbian population was flying before the oncoming tide of the enemy armies—"one of the greatest tragedies in history," Lady Paget wrote; "a nation was shattered, crushed, and driven forth into the wilderness to die of cold and hunger." But, refusing to desert her Serbian patients, and in the hope of being able to save her large hospital stores for the help of the refugees, Lady Paget, with her staff, gallantly decided, in spite of strong opposition, to remain at Uskub and face the enemy. Describing this critical decision, a friend wrote of her: "Lady Paget's will was the only fixed point that night in the universal land-slide around her. By setting her single will against the stampede, she turned back the flood of panic that was hurrying the wretched inhabitants of the town away to certain destruction; for the next day in Uskub, when it became known that the British Mission was staying to look after the wounded, it went far to reassure the people, and hundreds who would otherwise have gone to their death in the icy mountains of Albania remained in the shelter of their homes."

With the coming of the Bulgarians on October 22nd began a long and difficult period. Until the middle of February 1916 the Hospital Unit remained at Uskub, prisoners in the enemy's hands. But, owing to Lady Paget's tact and resource, they were able to carry on work of inestimable value, not only in nursing many hundred wounded, both Serbian, Bulgarian, and Austrian, but also in feeding and clothing thousands of Serbian refugees. Through the worst weeks of winter, between three and four thousand were fed and clothed daily, and from first

to last over 70,000 were relieved entirely from Lady Paget's stores. It is a remarkable tribute to her personality that the enemy, though not too plentifully equipped themselves, should yet have allowed her to retain possession of this large quantity of stores, trusting as they did to her scrupulous sense of fairness and straight-dealing.

By February 1916, Lady Paget and her workers had done all in their power for Serbia. By this time the refugees had been either interned or sent to their homes, the hospital had been evacuated of patients, the staff was worn out with hard work, and the stores were exhausted. After difficult negotiations Lady Paget obtained permission to leave and was able to return with her unit to England.

This is the third war in which she has given herself unsparingly to help the Serbians, and she has become an object of worship to this desolate people. To mark the national gratitude, King Peter has bestowed upon her the first class of the Order of St Sava, an honour that had never before been given to an uncrowned woman.



MISS LILIAN BARKER, C.B.E. MISS MABEL COTTERELL.

*To face p. 9.*

## III

## MISS LILIAN BARKER, C.B.E., AND MISS MABEL COTTERELL

THE first element in the great development of munition work during the war, which has drawn women in tens of thousands into the service of their country, has certainly been the all-powerful motive of patriotism. But second to this, the practical success of the work has been made possible largely through the recognition and development of welfare work. What we understand nowadays by "welfare" does not consist merely in the provision of canteens and other amenities for workers. It means the study of human nature, the introduction of the humanising element into work. Experience has proved that there is nothing in the world so calculated to get the best out of human nature as the human touch. Welfare work, undertaken sporadically in this country since the beginning of the nineteenth century, has been gradually introduced in our factories by the more enlightened employers, but the advent of women in such great numbers to munition works has set the seal of official approval on the system.

The result of this work cannot be better illustrated than by the example of what has been accomplished by two of the most successful welfare workers.

Miss Lilian Barker, the Lady Superintendent at

the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, supervises the women operators employed there with the good humour and sagacity of an ideal statesman. When Miss Barker took up her work at Woolwich in December 1915, there were 400 women and girls employed at the Arsenal. To-day there are over 25,000, every one of whom has been personally engaged by this "superwoman" of Woolwich.

Round Miss Barker's office there gathers a constant throng of workers, and it is one of her tasks, with the assistants whom she has trained, to straighten out their difficulties, to inquire into their grievances, and to act if need be as mediator with their superior officers. She advises all who come to her for help as to their health, their meals, their recreation, and the hundred and one details which the domestic guardian of a huge works can set to rights by understanding, patience, and tact. It is hard to give an adequate impression of the wonderful atmosphere which Miss Barker has created at Woolwich, but a visitor privileged to go round the shops in her company cannot fail to be deeply struck, not only by her influence with the workers, but by the general sense of contentment and health. As one approaches a shop, one hears the girls singing at their work—a sure sign of happiness. When Miss Barker enters, their faces light up, gay greetings pass, and one feels instinctively the confidence and mutual trust with which she has inspired her great family.

Miss Barker makes frequent tours round the women's shops (it is said to take a week to go over the whole Arsenal), and all the time she is on the watch for possible improvements—perhaps the better ventilation of a factory, or some needed alteration in

a cloakroom—stopping ever and again for a word with a girl on some matter relating to her well-being. It is rare to see a sickly face, even among the workers in the danger zone, and visitors are struck by the high proportion of good looks, even of beauty. The workers are drawn from every grade of society, but the democracy of the overall and cap levels all distinctions.

Recently much trouble was experienced by the Arsenal management owing to bad timekeeping in the shops. Able to earn considerable sums of money by working only three or four days weekly, the girls were apt to stay away for the rest of the week. Miss Barker was approached and asked to take over the responsibility for the timekeeping, never before part of her work, and the results were astonishing. "If you leave 200 fuse-rings incomplete," she would say, in making personal appeals to small groups of girls, "they delay 200 fuses. 200 fuses delay 200 shells from being sent out to the front. Think what 200 shells might mean to Tommy in a tight corner!" Miss Barker knows the wisdom of instilling into each worker the sense of her personal responsibility, and under her inspiration the timekeeping difficulty is no longer an acute problem.

Miss Mabel Cotterell is another welfare worker who has accomplished a stupendous task. Little more than a year ago the first buildings of the greatest Filling Factory in the country began to rise from a desolate bog on the borders of England and Scotland. During the year a town has grown to house the thousands of women employees who came to work in answer to the national appeal for their help. Miss Cotterell engaged and took to

Gretna the first fifty fisher-girls from the Aberdeen coast. "I had one assistant in those days," Miss Cotterell recalls, "and we met the new-comers at the countryside station and took them over the fields to the hostel and the bungalow which had been furnished for their use. It was well they came first in the summer days, for there were then no proper roads, no lights, no shops, no halls or clubrooms, while at the factory the canteens were not ready for use. However, it was warm and sunny, and there were flowers and the birds sang. The girls carried sandwich lunches with them, had a good meat meal on returning to the hostel, and a pleasant country walk in the evening."

To-day there are 64 hostels and 30 bungalows at Gretna, and Miss Cotterell has an army of assistants, clerks, matrons, and factory supervisors. The former wilderness is now inhabited by a well-housed community, organised in all details with a thoroughness and practical care which speak volumes for the genius of its moving spirit.

When the workers came to inhabit the convenient and attractive homes prepared for them, they found that equally enlightened plans had been formulated for their welfare. Miss Cotterell has kept careful watch of the leisure hours of those under her charge, and she has seen that every opportunity for rest, recreation, and improvement is open to them, and facilities for reading, writing, playing games, and attending classes. Periodic entertainments are given —sometimes by the "Gretna Ramblers," a troupe of munition girls who have been trained in singing, dancing, and recitation.

The added responsibility of having the girls entirely

resident, as at Gretna, entails serious problems. The whole work of catering, and the domestic arrangements of the hostels fall on the Welfare Department. Another of its duties is to file the record of every girl in the factory; and the procedure for discharges, leave of absence, transfers, or sick leave, all passes through this Department—a considerable task when, at the rate at which the factory is increasing, as many as 200 new girls arrive in one day. Inevitably, difficulties of administration are not unknown, even in a model community. There has been occasional shortage of furniture, dampness of new houses, or girl workers unaccustomed to discipline who decline to obey orders. But difficulties seem to vanish under Miss Cotterell's experienced touch. Her wise administration is already responsible for a marked improvement, not only in health and physique, which good food, clean housing, and regular employment have brought to the workers. Her influence is also noticeable in a greater regard for truth, honesty, and duty.

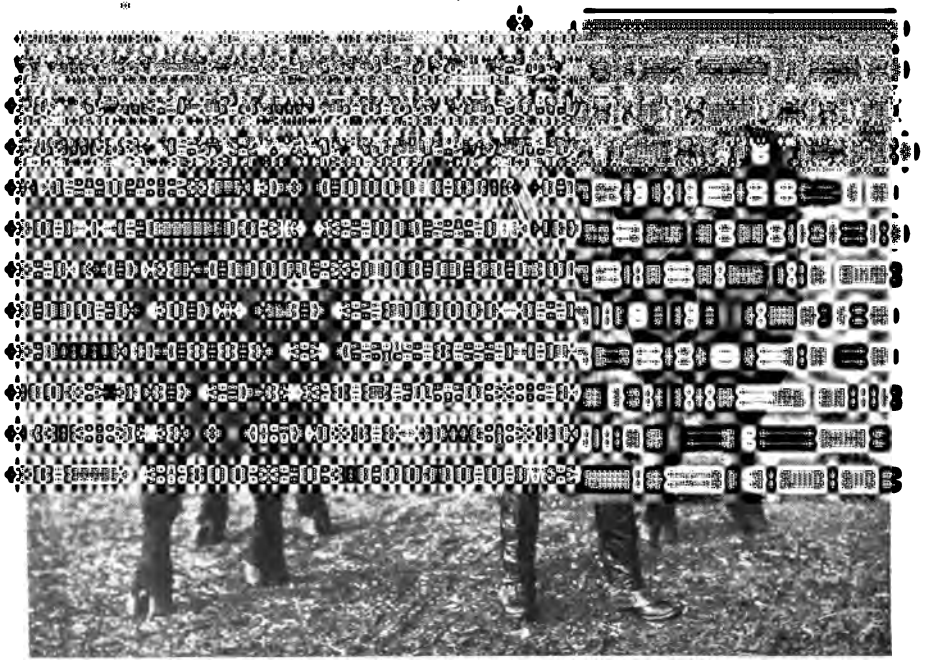
This outcome of women's munition work will mean much in the future developments of their industrial life. Women like Miss Barker and Miss Cotterell, in attempting a great achievement, have accomplished an immeasurable one.

## IV

## MISS C. E. MATHESON AND THE VILLAGE LAND WORKERS

EARLY in 1915, when recruiting for the Army was beginning to draw men away from agriculture as from all other work, a first effort was made to substitute women for men on the land. Although she knew nothing of agriculture, or the management of live stock, and was unaccustomed to hard manual work, Miss Matheson determined to offer herself as one of the pioneers. Before the war she was known in a very different sphere, for as a promising authoress of the younger school she had already attracted wide popularity. On volunteering, Miss Matheson was sent for a four weeks' agricultural training course to a Farm Institute to learn to milk; to make butter; to harness and drive a team; to clean, dress, and prepare land; to plant and hoe; to clean stables and cow-houses; to feed cattle; to disregard backaches, weariness and blistered hands; and to live a new, hard life.

After this breaking in, she went to a Wiltshire dairy-farmer who possessed forty to fifty cows in milk. He was prejudiced against women workers, and Miss Matheson's first day was not a happy one. Writing of it afterwards, she said: "I arrived on a Saturday. On Sunday morning I assisted with the milking, and found I was expected to milk at least



*Wynferd Swinburne.*

MISS C. E. MATHESON AT THE PRINCE OF WALES' STOCK FARM IN CORNWALL.

eight or ten animals. My four weeks' training had simply taught me *how*—there had been little time for practising new accomplishments. Consequently my employer told me he would not require me after the end of the week. This announcement was a shock, and exceedingly discouraging. However, I toiled through that week, and at the end of it was asked to stay. Soon I was milking from eight to fifteen cows twice a day; had full charge of the churns and pails, took the milk to the station to meet the London train, looked after the poultry and helped on the land—harvesting, threshing, spreading manure, etc."

Of course, such work meant rising at five, and by the time Miss Matheson returned from her evening drive to the station it was nearly seven, but the station drive was, she said, a pleasurable duty, "for the sight of the London train reminded me that I still lived in the world."

Miss Matheson spent seven months on the Wiltshire farm, and the farmer on her departure paid her the compliment of engaging three girls to assist him. She then went to the Prince of Wales's farm on the Duchy of Cornwall estate, where she is still working.

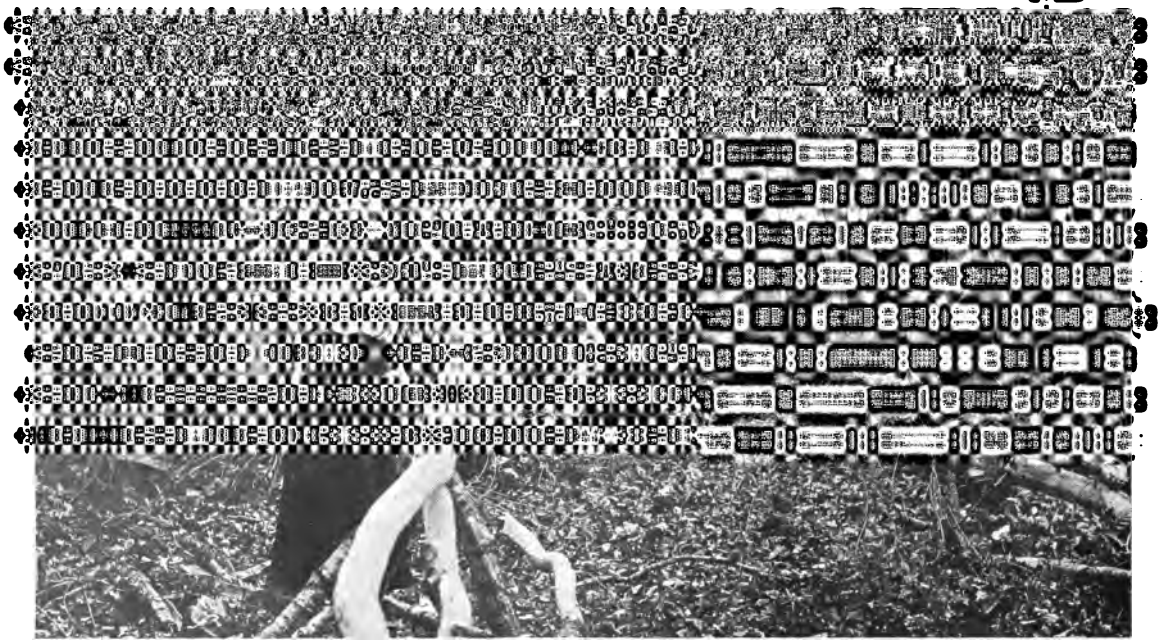
This farm specialises in stock-breeding, and the herd is a large and valuable one. With cows to milk, calves to rear, bulls to groom and exercise, food to prepare, bedding to change, the work is perpetual, for there are only three workers to tend the animals, and people in charge of stock must work seven days a week. During the winter the cattle claim all the time and attention, but in the summer Miss Matheson manages to help on the land in addition. When autumn came, Miss Matheson's employers at the Duchy farm began to wonder if she would be able

to stand the winter work, but she hastened unhesitatingly to reassure them. The work certainly needs pluck and endurance, both physical and mental. The handling of bulls, for instance, demands no small amount of nerve. "I have had one or two adventures with the bulls," wrote Miss Matheson to a friend, "and though I must confess I tremble at times, I manage to hold my own. Of course, I could get help if I asked for it, but I do dislike asking. It gives one such an only-a-girl sort of feeling, and then again I am always afraid to let anyone know that sometimes I am afraid."

It is unnecessary to state the reasons which bring an educated woman voluntarily to take up such a hard and exacting life, not merely for a few weeks of summer, but month after month. Only a deeply-rooted motive can be the impelling force, and there can be no finer form of patriotism than the unsensational performance of these strenuous tasks, far from the glamour and excitement of direct contact with the war. Not only in the fruits of her own labour, but by the force of her example, as one of the pioneers along a new road for women, Miss Matheson is performing as fine a war service as any Englishwoman to-day.

Just as the educated women have made an inspiring response to the call of the country in taking up agricultural work, so also have the women of the villages. In many country districts they have always been accustomed to work on the land, but to-day thousands who never worked before have come forward to give the most concrete proof of their patriotism. They are rightly proud to be entitled to wear the green Government armlet, given for 30 days' work or 240 hours.

The most recent development of women's land



WOMEN AS WOODCUTTERS.

*To face p. 17.*

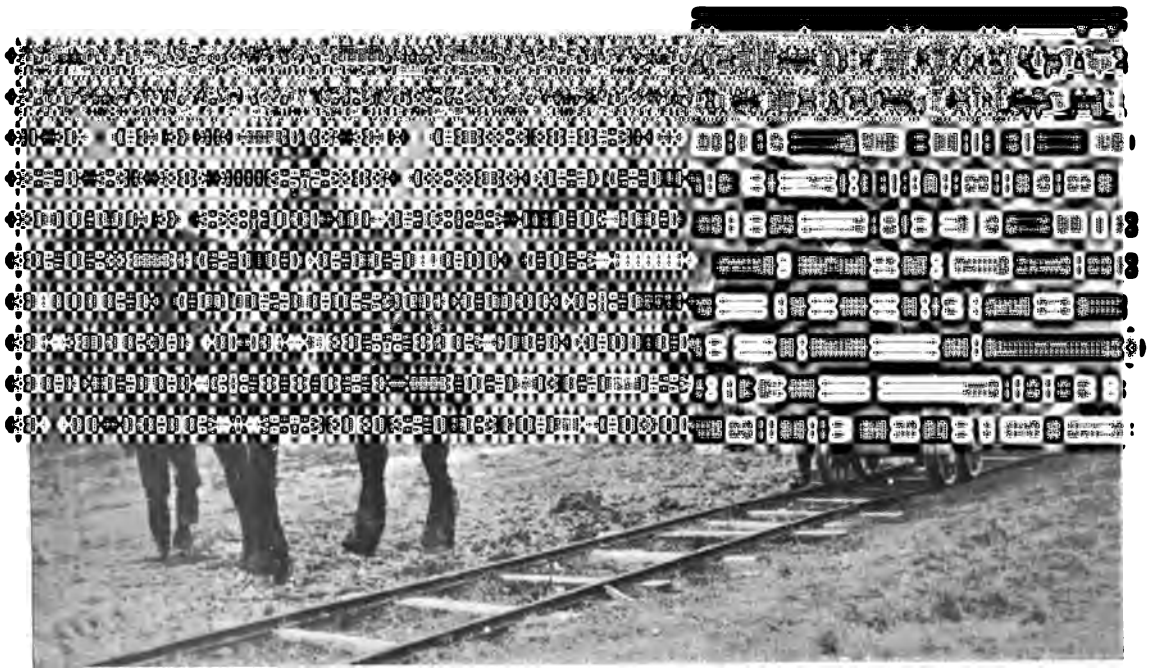
work is their employment on timber-felling and bark-stripping; and though this is a completely new industry for women, and has not so far been taken up on a general scale, the results of the first experiments are full of promise. Timber work has been started in Devonshire under the energetic auspices of Miss Calmady Hamlyn, the inspecting officer for the Western District of England under the Board of Agriculture. An expert woodman instructor, after watching some of the novices at work, pronounced that in barking these women already excel men, and in tree-felling they will certainly equal them.

Many of the village women whose husbands are serving have wisely taken up land work as being the best antidote to worry. From Devonshire comes the story of a soldier ordered to the front, who gave his wife the parting counsel: "My dear, you go up and work on that old field to-morrow; it will help you more than anything." Mrs Hockin went, and worked indomitably at any job in all weathers, and is proud that she can earn a man's day-wage at piece-work. "Why I am a war worker is because I felt it was my duty to do my bit," Mrs Hockin writes. "I am a married woman with three children. My husband has joined the Army, and I have done my best to help my country. As I live in the country, there is nothing for me to do but to work on the land, which I have done for nearly two years. . . . I have worked on the farm doing various kinds of work, such as weeding corn, hoeing turnips, spreading manure over the fields, turning up ground, picking in apples, wheeling away coke, helping in the harvest-fields, both hay and corn, and, by what our employers have told our instructor, we

have given them every satisfaction." Mrs Hockin has recently taken up the new timber-felling work, and is now leader of a gang of woodwomen. Though she is new to the work, Mrs Hockin is able to fell trees at the rate of thirty in half a day, and she states that she does not find the work unduly fatiguing, though "a bit windy."

An agricultural demonstration by women, held recently in Surrey under the auspices of the Board of Agriculture, provided striking examples of the excellence of women's agricultural work. A hundred and twenty women took part, the majority of whom have started the work since the war. They entered for competitions in ploughing, harrowing, milking, management of calves and horses, hoeing corn, hand weeding, etc. In spite of the difficulties occasioned by bad weather, and having to work with strange animals under unfamiliar conditions, the women succeeded in making a deep impression on the farmers who came to watch their efforts. The sensation of the afternoon was caused in the milking competition, when the first prize was won by Miss M. Soutar, aged $10\frac{1}{2}$, who obtained a total of ninety-five points out of a possible hundred. Experimental demonstrations of this kind will do much to solve one of the greatest difficulties in the employment of women, namely, the conversion of the farmers; but most of those who have given the women a chance have not had cause to regret it.

When the farmers recognise the motive behind the women's work, and are willing not only to employ them but to treat them generously, it is certain that both farmers and women, working together under the same influence of patriotism, are bound to achieve results of which both may be proud.



*Alfieri.* THE DAY'S LAST LOAD OF TIMBER.

*To face p. 19.*

## V

## DR ELSIE INGLIS

To Miss Inglis, M.B., C.M., belongs the honour of originating the Scottish Women's Hospitals, one of the noblest efforts achieved by women in the war. As a medical woman, Dr Inglis, who qualified in 1892, has specialised in surgery, and for many years she has held the posts of surgeon and gynæcologist to the Edinburgh Hospital and Dispensary for Women and Children, and lecturer to the School of Medicine in Edinburgh.

At the outbreak of war Dr Inglis felt that the medical services of women should be organised for the country, and she originated the idea of forming the Scottish Women's Hospital Units for war service, staffed entirely by women. The idea was carried out through the organisation of the Scottish Federation of Women Suffrage Societies. In the early months the War Office, though since converted, refused to accept women's hospitals, so Dr Inglis and her committee offered their services to the Allies. Their record of work is truly wonderful, and presents an outstanding example of women's industry and administrative ability. Hospitals have been established and maintained in France, Serbia, Corsica, Salonika, Rumania, and Russia, and the work has been entirely supported by the funds which the

organisation has raised, mainly through the branches of the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies throughout Great Britain.

Dr Inglis has been throughout the leading spirit, and has displayed extraordinary initiative. After spending the first months of the war in starting the work at headquarters, she went to Serbia in 1915 to act as Commissioner to the Scottish Women's Hospitals established there. One unit on its way to Serbia was detained for a few weeks in Malta for service with the British wounded at a moment of medical shortage, and Lord Methuen, the Military Governor, wrote a glowing appreciation of their work. "They leave here," he wrote, "blessed by myself, surgeons, nurses, and patients alike, having proved themselves most capable and untiring workers." In Serbia the Scottish women were confronted with all the hardships and difficulties experienced by workers in that unfortunate country. Undaunted, however, they established their hospitals, heroically overcoming the problems of sanitation and supplies which beset them on all sides. The hospital at Kragujevatz, over which Dr Inglis had personal charge, was described by the military authorities as a picture of cleanliness, order, and comfort.

When the time of the Serbian retreat came, the five hospitals in charge of the Scottish women fell back towards Albania. At Krushevatz Dr Inglis decided to remain with her staff to care for the Serbian wounded during the enemy occupation. Another unit under Dr Alice Hutchinson also stayed, and was taken prisoner; while the remaining staffs accompanied the retreating armies across the mountains.

"These months at Krushevatz were a strange

*To face p. 21.*

mixture of sorrow and happiness," Dr Inglis wrote afterwards. "There was a curious exhilaration in working for those grateful, patient men . . . yet the unhappiness in the Serbian houses and the physical wretchedness of those cold, hungry prisoners lay always like a dead weight on our spirits."

By February 1916 the hospital was emptied and the staff sent as prisoners to Vienna. After enduring many discomforts, they were eventually released through the good offices of the American Embassy, and enabled to return to England, where their friends had heard no word of them during four months. When the veil was at last lifted, it showed Dr Inglis coming out of all the stress and suffering the first woman to wear the decoration of the White Eagle, given to her by the Serbian Government in recognition of her services. Other members of her unit received the Order of St Sava. "The Serbian nation," said the Crown Prince, "will never forget what these women have done."

But not content with such services to Serbia, and with her courage still undaunted, Dr Inglis again set out in September 1916, at the head of a fresh unit, for service with the Serbian army fighting in South Russia. The unit, numbering seventy-six women, comprised a staff of women doctors, an X-ray operator, a dispenser, seventeen fully-trained nurses, sixteen orderlies, besides cooks and laundresses. The accompanying transport column, under the Hon. Mrs Haverfield, consisted of eight ambulances, two kitchen cars, a repair car, four lorries, and three touring cars, with a large staff of women chauffeurs and cooks. The unit landed at Archangel and travelled across Russia to Odessa, where the workers met with a

rousing reception. They then proceeded to join the Serbian division to which they were attached, in the Dobrudja, and another splendid chapter of Scottish Women's Hospital work was opened. A base hospital was started at Medjidia in Rumania, with a field station nearer to the front; but after about a fortnight's work the inevitable evacuation was ordered before the Bulgarian advance, and the unit retreated with the army. Of this first hospital in Rumania Dr Inglis writes: "The day after the unit arrived at Medjidia, where the whole seventy-five were obliged to camp in one big room, wounded began to pour in and ambulances to ply between there and the firing line. There were no roads, just tracks across endless plains." Of the field station Dr Inglis says: "The destination was a place smoking from shells, and filled with a sense of destruction and desolation impossible to describe. The Scottish women set up a camp near by, and were attached to the Serbian Field Hospital. Aeroplanes bombed them daily, and on one occasion the ambulance suffered a heavy bombardment. When the orders came to move, the transport went through five appalling days of labour, which can be understood only by people who have done cross-country tracks in roadless countries . . . the scenes were indescribable—of confusion, terror, misery; of blocks of carts, troops, pigs, women, children, lame horses, and exhausted animals of all sorts. The refugees were throwing out things to lighten their carts, and the Scottish women got out and picked them up to use for their own kitchen."

Dr Inglis and the hospital party, on evacuating Medjidia, managed to secure what is known as a "sanitary train"—a long train of horse waggons,

very different from an ambulance train, and they had to do their best for the crowd of wounded on board. Eventually Dr Inglis reached Braila, where she was able to render valuable help to a large number of Rumanian wounded, who were very short of medical assistance. Some members of the unit have since returned to England, but Dr Inglis is still in Rumania. She is temporarily working for the Russian army, pending the re-formation of the Serbian divisions, to which she will return.

The General in command of the Russian Red Cross on the Rumanian front (Prince Dolgouroukoff) has conferred the medal of St George on all the members of the unit now at Reni who have worked under fire.

"Wherever the odds against the Allies seem overwhelming, there one may be nearly sure of finding a unit of the Scottish Women's Hospitals working for the wounded," writes an admirer of their work. "You do not find them in the well-equipped hospitals surrounded by every modern appliance, with crowds of men orderlies to carry out the heavy work, but rather in back-blocks of the war, as one may say, fighting a desperate battle of their own against dirt, disease, and wounds, and winning back precious lives of men whose language is in many cases unknown to them."

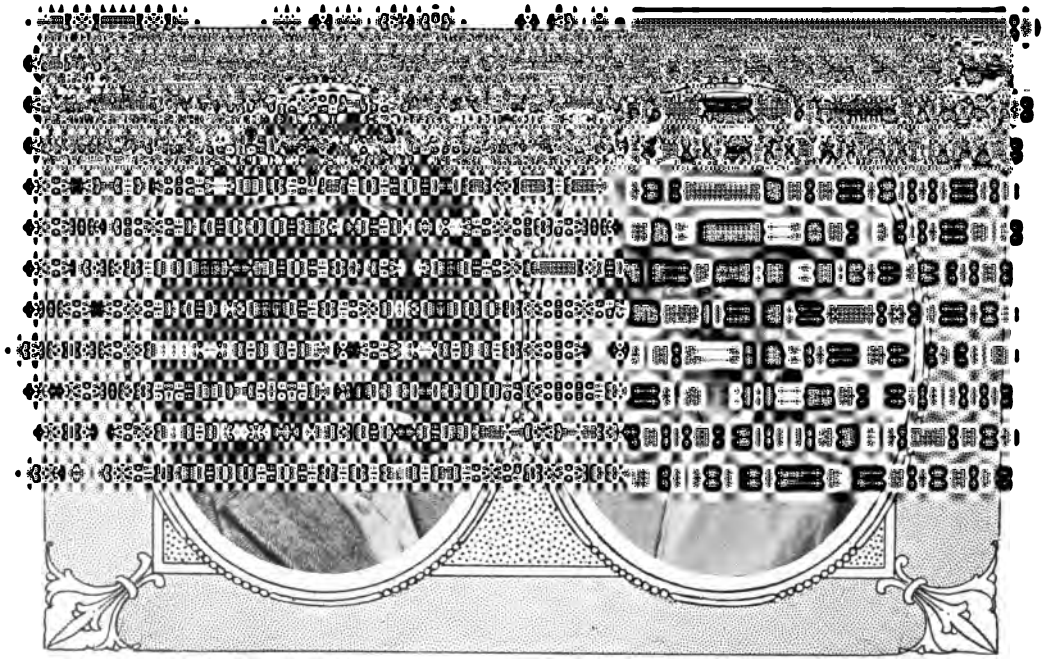
Dr Elsie Inglis has that magnetic personality which can command efficiency, even with inadequate equipment and in hopeless environment. The inspiring work of this great woman doctor makes her indeed a worthy leader for those wonderful Scottish women, who are putting their whole soul into the work they have undertaken, without any thought of recompense, without vainglory, and without any other motive than the desire to help and heal.

## VI

## MISS HARRIET SPROT, THE MISSES PLAYFAIR, AND LADY BADEN-POWELL

THE Young Men's Christian Association commenced work in the camps in France as soon as war began. For many years it had been accustomed to provide huts in the summer camps at home, but since the war the organisation has increased to such an extent that it now covers a vast field of enterprise. The Y.M.C.A. huts and those of the Church Army have proved the salvation of the men, who, when off duty, had nowhere to go, while in the camps the canteens provide an opportunity for them to buy small necessaries, tobacco, or any supplementary food in addition to their Army rations. The work of the ladies in the Y.M.C.A. huts in France is largely responsible for their great success. This work is arranged by a Committee under Princess Helena Victoria, with the Countess of Bessborough as hon. secretary, and it is owing to their insight and skilful organisation that it has been so successfully managed.

The workers, whose service is entirely voluntary, sign on for four months, pay all their own expenses —travelling, board, lodging, etc.,—and provide their uniform — dark grey coats and skirts with blue



MISS AUDREY PLAYFAIR.

MISS LILIAS PLAYFAIR.

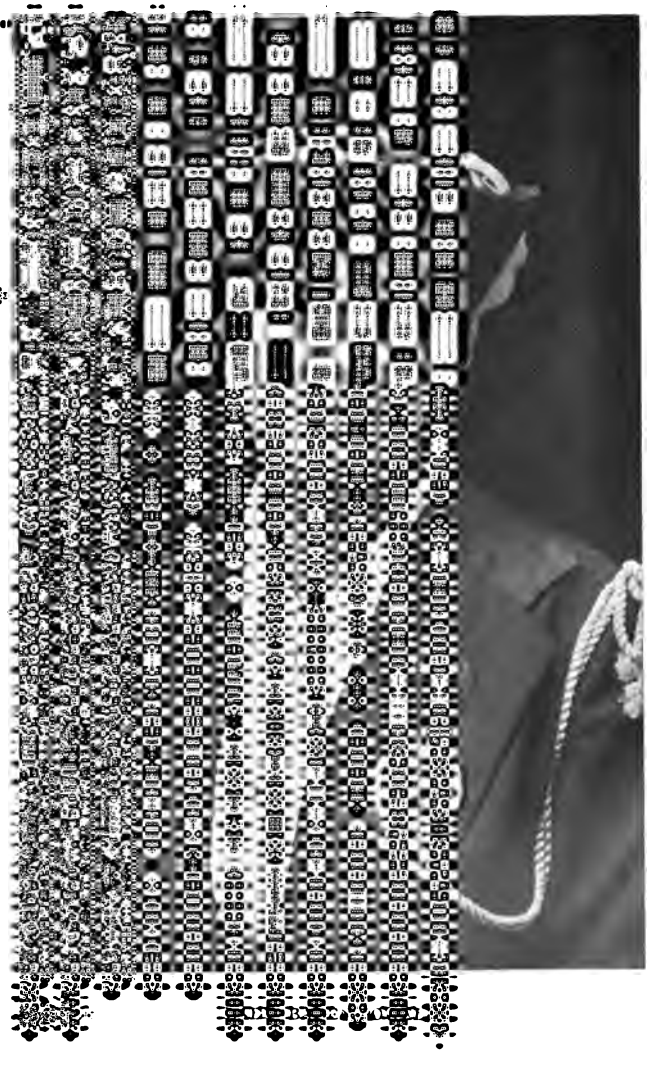
facings. Many of them have been living in France for over two years, in the simplest accommodation, devoid of all luxury, and devoting themselves entirely to the work. The best illustration of what they are doing can be taken from the experiences of a few typical workers.

Miss Harriet Sprot manages a district which has its headquarters in a base town under the shadow of a great cathedral. Describing the average day of her workers, Miss Sprot says that their mornings till twelve o'clock are spent in preparation of the canteen counters, so that the quickest possible distribution of refreshments and other small purchases may be made to the soldiers in the short hours fixed by the camp authorities which they may spend at the hut. No money is taken over the counter—tickets have to be bought. "It is usual for the queue of men waiting to buy tickets to extend the whole length of the room. On a busy night it even stretches into the billiard-room and curls back half way up the main hut." Old Y.M.C.A. *habitués* know the arrangements so well that no time is wasted, but Miss Sprot reports that it takes double the time to serve a newly arrived draft, to whom the French money and its purchasing power are sources of bewilderment. The heaviest part of the work is always at night, but the men are unanimously said to be so good-natured, patient, and orderly that, however dense the crowd, they all get served in time. When the hut closes, the workers may be justified in feeling that valuable work has been accomplished and the night's rest well earned.

In every hut there is a small library counter where postcards are sold, notepaper is given out, books or

games are lent, and games of billiards are arranged, a bell being rung every twenty minutes to mark the close of each game. Miss Sprot writes: "To sit down here is considered a rest, but one can have a busy time. . . . Private A. brings his watch and hopes it will not be too much trouble to get it mended for him. You take down his name, and hope the watch will not get mixed up with some half-dozen others passing through your hands, and that you will be able to get it back in time from the watchmaker before Private A. goes up the line. He himself has apparently no misgivings; indeed, the implicit faith of himself and his fellows in one's unworthy self is something quite touching. Many questions are asked and answered. I have been consulted on religious matters and listened to innumerable family histories. The first move in a confidential talk comes when Tommy pulls out his pay-book and spreads before you the photos of his relatives. To most of us the hour spent each evening at this little counter is one to look forward to."

Another worker is Miss Lilias Playfair, who, with a group of other ladies, went to a base town in France in February 1915. A canteen had been started in the only available place, a very small, inconvenient room; but, even so, Miss Playfair reports that it was "packed every evening, and most of the day." Gradually the proper huts were built in the outlying camps and in the town, and there are now over ten huts, and two cinemas in this district, which Miss Playfair and her sister, Miss Audrey Playfair, manage in alternate spells. Describing her work, Miss Playfair says: "Besides serving at the canteens and helping with the arranging and ordering of food,



[illegible] p. 27.

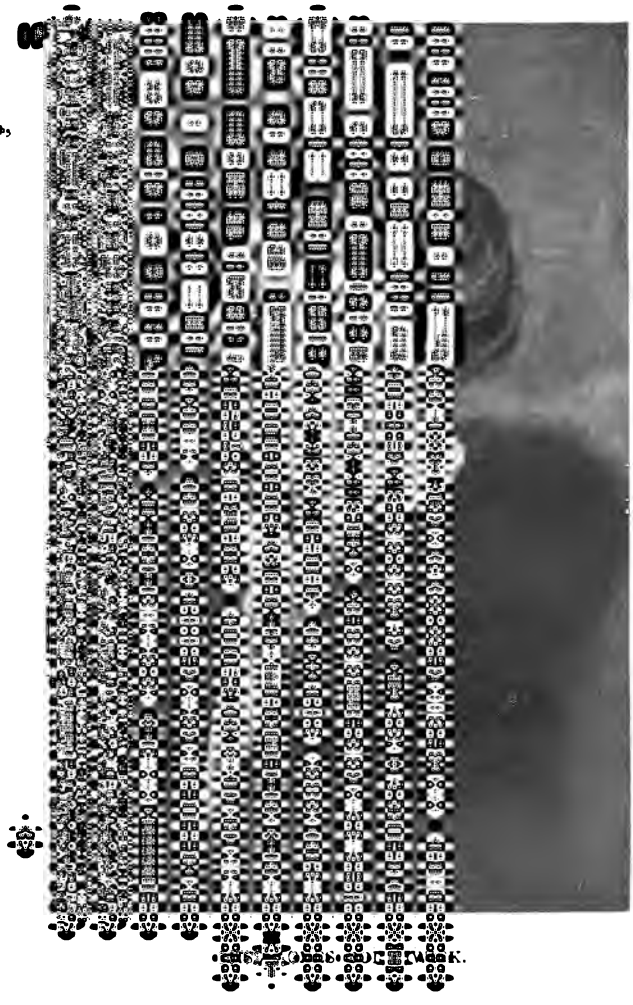
we do most of the entertainments. I have organised a small orchestra which plays at different huts, and last year we had a most successful Pierrot troupe. . . . We hope shortly to produce a 'revue,' and two or three short plays. French classes are held regularly, and the men are keen to learn. It is hard work, as our hours are long, but it is very interesting, and the men are so appreciative and say that they do not know how they could endure things without the Y.M.C.A."

How much the Tommies themselves appreciate the presence of the Y.M.C.A. ladies may be seen in the following extract, written by a Tommy, describing what he calls a "heaven-sent organisation": "When I entered the hut I was greeted with that glad smile of welcome which I shall always associate with the Y.M.C.A. by real English ladies—the first I had seen for over seven months, except the nurses, of course. I only wish to God that I could adequately describe my feelings, and I know mine were the same as thousands of my brothers-in-arms. It seemed to me that, amidst all the awful turmoil and din, with the horrors of the retreat and the first battle for Ypres imperishably photographed on my memory, I had found a haven of rest." Volumes could be written by the lady workers on the mingled humour and pathos in their interviews with the men. In a letter to a friend at home a worker says: "All the time out here life is so full of humour, if only one had the gift of describing it. At one moment one is doing something for a very correct General, and at the next one is in a hut having tea with a soldier, ex-greengrocer, quite charming, but the unmistakable type! Everyone who interests the greengrocer has

to sign their names in his Bible. Then one takes an Australian out shopping, and he tips one two francs for one's trouble!"

Quite apart from their ministrations to the men's material needs, the influence of the Y.M.C.A. ladies in France has been invaluable—cheering, encouraging, and helping the men in countless ways in their brief hours of leisure, and relieving by their presence the endless monotony of their life of discipline.

Among the interesting features of the Y.M.C.A. work are the Scout Huts started by Lady Baden-Powell at two of the bases. The ladies who work in them are mostly Scout-masters and wear the Scout uniform, old Boy Scouts amongst the troops being their most keenly appreciative patrons. Lady Baden-Powell went to France in October 1915 to organise the work when the huts were built, and she worked for some months in the first two huts. In June 1916 a Girl Guide Hut was built from funds earned by Girl Guides who, forbidden by their rules from collecting money, each did a day's work for the fund. Lady Baden-Powell is putting her energies into developing the Girl Guide movement on the same scale as the Boy Scouts. Realising the responsibilities of citizenship which the opportunities of the war have brought to the women of the country, the advantages are manifest of a voluntary training for girls, on the lines which have been so successful with boys, and the Girl Guide movement is a step to this end.



*To face p.* 29.

## VII

## MISS AGNES BORTHWICK

No woman's work has more directly furthered the prosecution of the war than that of Miss Agnes Borthwick, who within one year has risen to the unique position—for a woman—of works manager in a great Munition Factory.

When Miss Borthwick sees the trains laden with ammunition steaming out of the factory straight for Southampton, she must feel with justifiable pride that she and her 4000 girls are working for the country as vitally as the soldiers, who will fire the unceasing stream of shells which the girls are sending to them day by day.

Miss Borthwick's rise to her present position of responsibility has been rapid, even judged by the standards of war promotion. She is of Scottish birth. A woman of high educational attainments, she took an honours M.A. degree in English at Glasgow University in 1912, and subsequently held a research scholarship at Bryn Mawr College, U.S.A. Miss Borthwick spent two years studying in America, and from Bryn Mawr went to Whittier Hall, University of Columbia, New York, and Barnard Hall, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, Mass. She also did some research work in Harvard Library.

At the outbreak of war Miss Borthwick returned

[illegible] 1915, when the newly [illegible] appealed for women [illegible] went to Woolwich for [illegible] the theoretical and [illegible] cartridge filling. At [illegible] gained a first-grade or

[illegible] Smethwick was sent to [illegible] a new filling factory [illegible]. Here she began work [illegible] she and her workers [illegible] the newly built blocks [illegible] trucks of empty shells, [illegible] ready to be filled with [illegible] January the shops were [illegible] real work to begin, and [illegible] instructed in filling. [illegible] factory grew rapidly. Every week [illegible] were engaged, who started work [illegible] taken over from the [illegible] finished. Two months [illegible] promoted from forewoman [illegible] and in May, on the [illegible] however, she took his place. [illegible] original workers had [illegible] when an inspector came [illegible] question of labour dilution [illegible] single man, for the only [illegible] were a few engineers [illegible]

[illegible] the filling of 18-pounder [illegible] shells, but they also do [illegible] shells, and the trollying [illegible] and nursing staff, the

police patrol, the fire patrol, and the canteen workers are all women. Work never ceases night and day. The girls work in shifts of eight and three-quarter hours.

There are now 130 shops, and the factory covers such a large acreage that its boundary is about five miles round. Above everything else, it must not be forgotten that the *entire* work of this factory is what is called "danger work." Although every possible precaution is taken for the safety and health of the workers, in all handling of powerful explosives the element of danger must be present.

Miss Borthwick is only twenty-seven. She is a fresh-looking girl with a very quiet manner, suggesting a reserve of resolution and courage eminently necessary in her work. On her shoulders rests the heavy responsibility for the successful working of the factory, and she has helped to develop it in an incredibly short time from a few huts to the throbbing hive of industry which it is to-day. Owing to her efficiency, and because she has never failed to make good whatever she has undertaken, she has earned this great opportunity of service to the country. She talks of her work as calmly and naturally as if there were nothing remarkable about it. Yet she made this admission while on a recent three days' leave: "Until I came away from the factory, I hadn't realised how heavy and how unending the responsibility is."

## VIII

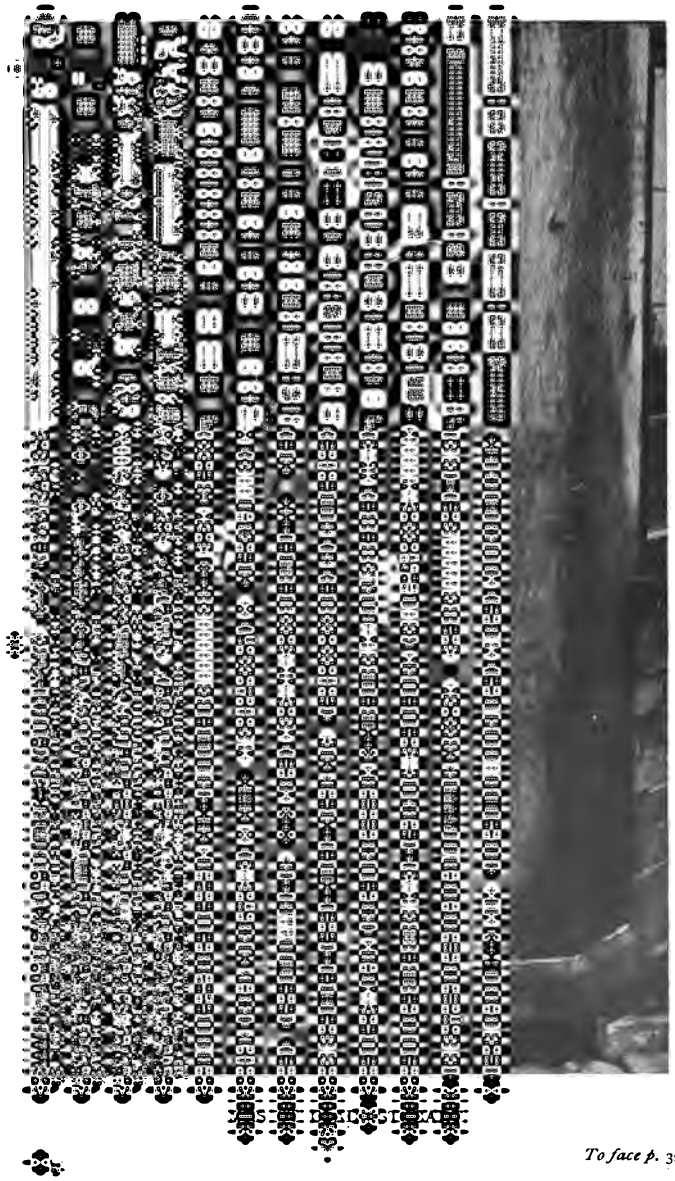
## MRS ST CLAIR STOBART

No woman has seen the war at closer quarters and in more varied fields of action than Mrs St Clair Stobart, and no one has worked harder to help the sick and wounded—on the field, in besieged fortresses, at base hospitals, and in the stricken villages of a ravaged and invaded country. Everywhere she has sought and found her opportunity to bear her part in the actual campaign—a part such as no woman has ever taken before.

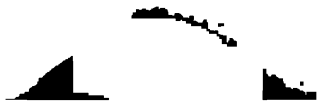
The outbreak of war found Mrs Stobart already trained, for she had gained her experience with the Women's Convoy Corps, which she founded, and which did such successful work in the Balkan War in 1912–1913.

Early in August 1914, therefore, she was entrusted with the leadership of an ambulance unit, under the organisation of the St John Ambulance Association, and proceeded at once to Brussels. Before a hospital could be established, the Germans had entered the city, and Mrs Stobart escaped with difficulty, after having been actually a prisoner in German hands, and condemned to be shot as a spy.

Nothing daunted by her first experience, Mrs Stobart then established a hospital in Antwerp. After three weeks of fine work the town was besieged,



*To face p.* 32



and the bombardment began. The hospital was in the direct line of fire of one of the enemy's objectives, the ammunition depôt, but under a storm of shell-fire Mrs Stobart and her unit rescued their wounded, and were themselves the last to leave the burning city, crossing the bridge of boats just before it was blown up.

After the fall of Antwerp Mrs Stobart accepted an invitation from the French Red Cross to establish a hospital at Cherbourg.

At first the work was very heavy and the numbers of wounded enormous, but once it was started, Mrs Stobart was able to leave the smoothly working hospital in good hands, and to answer the call to help Serbia, then in such dire need. Accordingly, after spending some time in making her preparations, she travelled to Serbia in April 1915 with a fresh unit.

On arrival Mrs Stobart began by establishing a camp hospital, entirely consisting of tents, at Kragujevatz.

It was the first experiment of this kind which had been tried, but the advantages of healthy outdoor conditions, as opposed to the alternative of insanitary buildings, were soon proved, for the hospital, which had been requested by the Serbian medical authorities to undertake surgical work, entirely escaped the scourge of typhus. Unfortunately, this was not so with regard to typhoid, from which several members of the staff died in June 1915, including the well-known author, Mrs Percy Dearmer, who, though far from strong, had offered her services to the unit, and had already done fine work.

During the first three months the hospital undertook both civil and military cases, and Mrs Stobart organised a further invaluable and successful scheme

in establishing roadside tent dispensaries in seven or eight remote villages. Altogether, within a few weeks, 22,000 civilians received surgical and medical assistance.

At the end of September 1915 came a signal proof of the confidence which Mrs Stobart had inspired in Serbia. The army was preparing its fresh resistance to the second invasion, and the Bulgarians were on the eve of declaring war. Mrs Stobart was approached by the Serbian military authorities and asked to mobilise a portion of her unit as a flying field hospital. She was appointed commander, with the rank of major in the Serbian army (the first time in history that such an appointment has been given to a woman), and the unit, which was called the First Serbian-English Field Hospital, was attached to the Schumadia division.

After making arrangements for the continuation of the work of the Kragujevatz hospital, Mrs Stobart chose for the ambulance column a dozen of her English women doctors and nurses, motor ambulance drivers, a cook, orderlies, interpreters, and about sixty Serbian soldiers. On October 1 the column started for the Bulgarian front, travelling by train, through Nish, to Pirot. But, after a few days of trekking in that direction, the column was ordered to move north with the division to within a few miles of Belgrade on the Danube front, to face the stronger enemy, the Germans and the Austrians. On October 14 the hospital camp was pitched within sound of the guns, and the first batches of wounded were received. But the stand of the Serbian army was destined to be a short one. Two days later, orders came to move southwards, and the first stage began

of the great retreat, which was to continue steadily for three months.

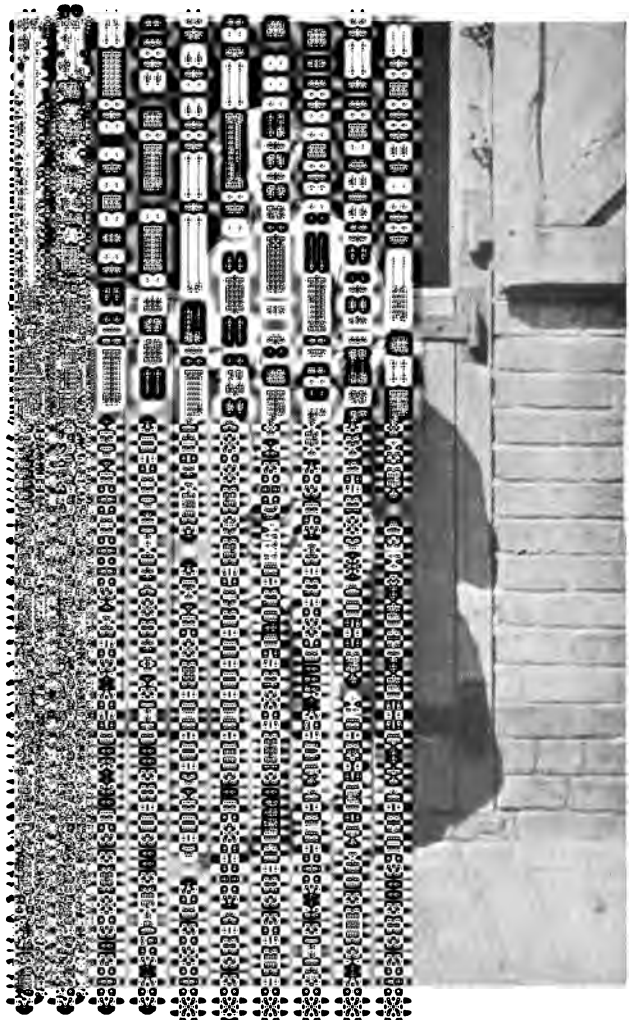
The life of the members of the field hospital during the retreat was indeed a strange one, for ever on the march, stopping for a few hours to pitch a camp and attend to the wounded brought to them from the battlefields close at hand, evacuating them by motor ambulance to the nearest railway or hospital, and then marching on again. Throughout the retreat Mrs Stobart rode at the head of her column night and day, selecting every inch of their road, struggling for a place for them in the endless procession of the straggling host that beset the mud-soddened roads and slippery mountain paths, obtaining food for them and their horses with infinite difficulty in the deserted villages through which the column passed. Forced to snatch odd hours of sleep when and where they could, always fully dressed, and prepared for the orders to march at any moment, they often narrowly escaped capture. The sound of the enemy guns was ever in their ears, the invading armies always at their heels. Mrs Stobart truly proved herself a leader in fact as well as in name, for no trained commander of troops could have shown a higher courage or faced emergencies with a more decided energy than this Englishwoman.

It was a cruel day for the hospital column when, at the end of a terrible forced march, during which Mrs Stobart was eighty-one hours in the saddle, the motor ambulance and the hospital equipment had at last to be destroyed and abandoned at the foot of the Montenegrin mountains, through which Mrs Stobart then led her skeleton column on foot. The horrors of the retreat increased every day, but the only way

to safety had to be faced, though it lay over trackless mountains 8000 feet high, through snow, ice, unbroken forests, and bridgeless rivers. It was then mid-winter. Men and animals died by the roadside in hundreds from starvation and exposure. Writing of the retreat afterwards, Mrs Stobart said: "Continued cold, exhaustion from forced marches, and increasing lack of food made the track a shambles . . . men by the hundred lay dead, dead from cold and hunger, by the roadside, and no one could stop to bury them. But worse still, men lay dying by the roadside, dying from cold and hunger, and no one could stay to tend them. The whole scene was a combination of mental and physical misery, difficult to describe in words. No one knows, nor ever will know accurately, how many people perished, but it is believed that not less than 10,000 human beings lie sepulchred in those mountains."

At last, on December 20, Mrs Stobart had the triumph of leading her weary but courageous column into Scutari in Albania, without the loss of a single one of its members—the only commander who succeeded in bringing a column intact through the retreat.

The chief officer of the Serbian medical staff expressed true sentiments when he wrote to Mrs Stobart: "You have made everybody believe that a woman can overcome and endure all the war difficulties . . . you can be sure, esteemed Madam, that you have won the sympathies of the whole of Serbia."



[illegible] CROFT.

Face p. 37.

## IX

## MISS E. G. BATHER AND MISS DOROTHY RAVENSCROFT

Miss Bather is one of the women whose sporting experiences in pre-war days have been turned to valuable account in the service of her country. Her knowledge of horses, gained in the enjoyment of hunting, has enabled her to undertake the serious and arduous work of running a Remount Depôt for the War Office under Mr Cecil Aldin, M.F.H.

Many girls who have hunted, or had their own horses, might think that they could easily do remount work; but it is not merely a case of being able to ride well, the riding is only the lightest part of the duties: it is a matter of settling down to a life of real hard work, requiring strength, courage, infinite patience and firmness. That Miss Bather has been able to organise a depôt successfully, and carry on the work entirely with the help of girl workers for over two years, is a tribute to any woman which can only be realised if the exact scope of the work is understood.

The functions of workers at remount depôts are to receive horses and mules which are sent to them, and to make them fit for active service. The animals arrive mostly in rough condition—the horses being of all types, from the heavy draught-horse to the

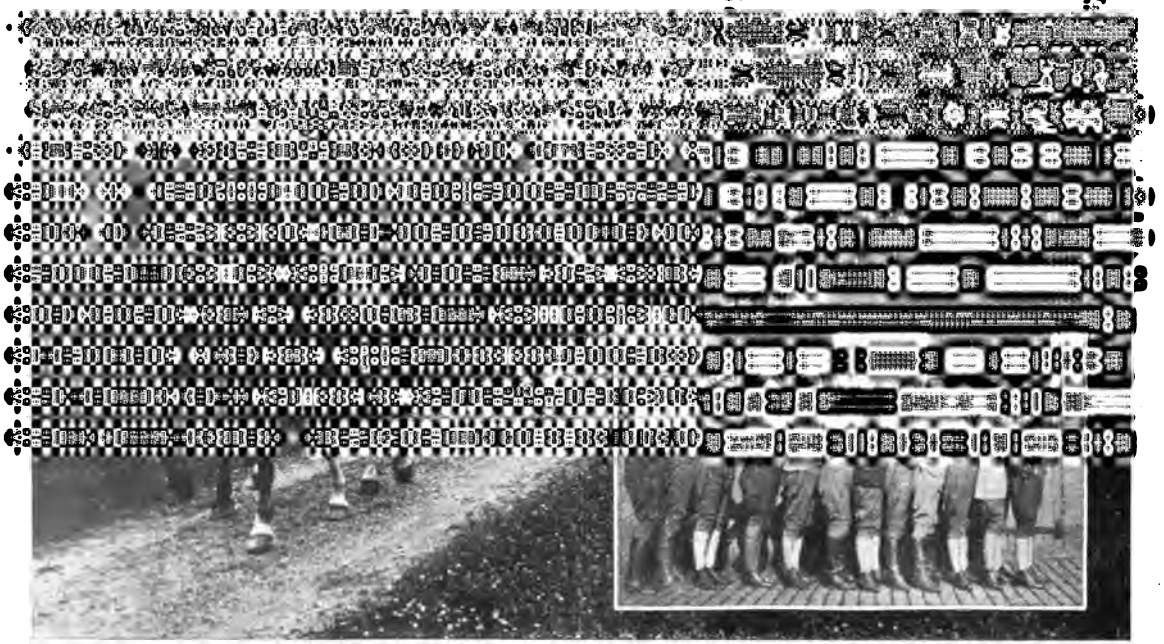
colonel's charger. An expert has said: "To be able to do this work, a girl must love her horse for himself; but that is not everything—she must be practical, capable, strong, self-denying, and brave."

The horses are usually sent to the depôt in mixed batches of thirty or more, dirty in their coats, perhaps thin and out of condition, and often lame or suffering from various ailments.

"It requires quite a lot of pluck in the first instance," writes Miss Bather, "to unload from the railway trucks, saddle up, and mount those horses that look as if they had been ridden lately, and ride them, each rider leading another horse, to their destination some five miles away."

The grooming of the horses is hard work and requires considerable strength, even when the horse is quiet; with wild and difficult horses it is necessary to hobble and muzzle them before grooming is possible. They are often deceptively quiet at first, and it may take a few days of bitter experience before the kickers and biters are discovered! Besides the daily grooming, which has to be performed for each horse like a child's toilet, there is the clipping and singeing. After the grooming comes the work of keeping the stables, which must be cleaned out and disinfected daily; while the harness and "tackle" have to be cleaned and polished. There is also the care of the horses in sickness and convalescence, which requires particular skill and knowledge.

With regard to the exercising, Miss Bather writes: "This is fraught with difficulties and anxieties, especially with a new lot of horses. To set the pace someone responsible has to lead the string



*Alfieri.*

(1) MISS BATHER AND HER "LADS" EXERCISING HORSES.
(2) SOME OF THE STABLE "HANDS."

*To face p. 39.*

with the quiet horses that will face the traffic; but though all army horses are supposed to be broken in, I have known our string resemble a Wild West Show!"

An eyewitness described an occasion when she happened to meet Miss Bather's "lads" out for exercising. One of the horses had taken fright, and, breaking loose, had become entangled in barbed wire near the road. The onlooker states that the girls behaved with the utmost coolness, extricating the struggling horse with courage and skill, and successfully preventing a stampede among the other horses.

During the first year of her work about 500 horses passed through Miss Bather's depôt, and in June 1917 she completed her second year of work.

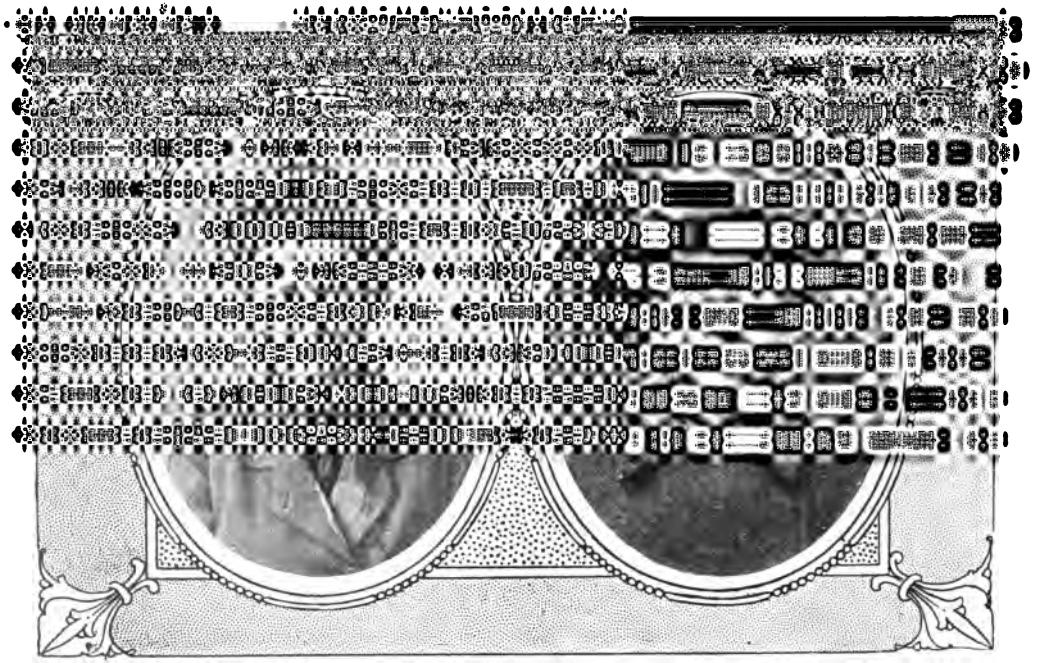
Miss Dorothy Ravenscroft is another lady who has been doing similar work for the War Office.

She is responsible for a remount depôt at Chester, where, with the help of twelve girl assistants, forty horses at a time are prepared for active service. The horses here are mostly officers' cobs and chargers, and, as at the other depôts, the girl workers do the entire work of the stables, as well as the exercising, grooming, and feeding of the horses.

The post of superintendent of a Remount Depôt is one of considerable responsibility, for the success of a depôt depends largely upon the personality of the responsible head. Her life is necessarily one of continual anxiety, not only for the horses, but for her girl workers, who need to be chosen carefully; the work is far too great a strain physically and mentally for girls under twenty. Writing to a friend recently, a superintendent said with truth: "One's

nerves need to be made of iron; I am wondering how much longer mine will stand the strain."

This is a question that women must be asking themselves in almost every branch of war work to-day, for all work just now is at high pressure. But the women at home are inspired with the same spirit as the men in the trenches, and are equally prepared to go on until they drop.



DR FLORENCE STONEY. MISS EDITH STONEY.

*To face p. 410*

## X

## MISS EDITH STONEY AND DR FLORENCE STONEY

Miss Edith Stoney and her sister, Dr Florence Stoney, are specialists in X-ray work, and in this vitally important branch of surgery they have both rendered fine service throughout the war.

Dr Stoney was head of the electrical department in the New Hospital for Women, London. Early in the war she went to Antwerp in Mrs St Clair Stobart's unit as head of the medical staff and in charge of the X-ray department. After the fall of Antwerp, when the hospital staff made their escape in London motor-buses only twenty minutes before the bridge of boats was blown up, the unit was re-established in a hospital at Cherbourg under the French Croix Rouge. The X-ray work was of course invaluable, and in giving an account of it Dr Stoney wrote:

"Most of our cases were septic fractures, for nearly all were septic by the time they reached us, four to eight days generally after being wounded, and most of the fractures were badly comminuted as well. The X-rays were much in request to show the exact condition of the part and the position of the fragments. In all cases the pieces of the shell had to be accurately located, and were then as a rule easily extracted."

With constant practice it became possible for Dr Stoney to tell by X-rays which were the dead pieces of bone in a comminuted facture, for observation showed that they threw a denser shadow than living bone. "One piece of dead bone three inches long was diagnosed first by X-rays," Dr Stoney reports, "and the early removal of these pieces greatly hastens recovery."

When the hospital was inspected by the consulting surgeon for the district, his first inclination was to regard a hospital staffed by women as hardly worthy of inspection; but after going through the wards he wrote:

"L'hôpital de Tourlaville est très bien organisé, les malades sont très bien soignés, et les chirurgiennes sont de valeur égale aux chirurgiens les meilleurs."

When the British army took over the northern part of the line in France, hospital arrangements were altered. The need for the Cherbourg hospital was over, as all British movable cases were taken to England; and therefore in the spring of 1915 the hospital was closed. Dr Stoney returned to England, and offered her services to the War Office, and in April 1915 she was asked to take over the X-ray department in the Fulham Military Hospital, a hospital of over 1000 beds, where she is still working.

Dr Stoney took up this work about a fortnight before the opening of the Endell Street Hospital under Dr Garrett Anderson; she is therefore the first woman doctor to work under the War Office in England. Dr Stoney not only undertakes the photographic branch of the X-ray work, but she diagnoses and reports on the cases from the photographs. Another branch of her work is to use X-rays actually

during operations for those surgeons who prefer to operate in this way. She also started a small department for X-ray treatment, which has proved beneficial in certain nerve and goitre cases.

Dr Stoney recently reported that considerably over 5000 cases had passed through her hands since she came to this hospital. She has a staff of V.A.D. assistants, two of whom she has trained in the work sufficiently to enable them to take over X-ray installations. One is now working in Rumania, and the other in London. Dr Stoney's splendid work has completely overcome any prejudice which may have attached to her as a woman when she first took up her post. Although she is the only woman doctor in the hospital, she works on an equal footing with the men, except that she holds no military rank.

Miss Edith Stoney is a woman of great university distinction, having been wrangler in the Mathematical Tripos at Cambridge. She was an Associate of Newnham College, Cambridge, and Lecturer in Physics to the London University. Astronomy is another subject on which she has lectured, and while at Newnham College she had charge of the telescope. She has also done valuable original work in relation to searchlights.

At the beginning of the war Miss Stoney joined the committee of the Women's Imperial Service League, and helped in the organisation of the hospital unit with which her sister went to Antwerp, fitting up the portable X-ray apparatus, which was subsequently of such great service. After the transfer of the hospital to Cherbourg she continued to assist in the organisation of its supplies. Her real war work,

however, may be said to have begun when she retired from her work as Lecturer in Physics in the spring of 1915 and joined the Scottish Women's Hospitals.

Miss Stoney first took up work at the tent hospital at Troyes, where she put up and ran the X-ray department, giving invaluable assistance to the surgeons by the accurate localisation of foreign bodies in wounds. The head surgeon, Dr Louise M'Ilroy, stated that she never failed to find a projectile searched for. This was indeed a tribute to the accurate localisation in the X-ray department. Another valuable branch of Miss Stoney's work was the taking of stereoscopic skiagrams. Miss Stoney took one of the very early skiagrams of gas bubbles in the tissues, due to gas gangrene, a development which has since come into great prominence.

In the autumn of 1915 Miss Stoney accompanied the hospital unit from Troyes when it was ordered to Serbia by the French authorities. Before leaving for Serbia she had the foresight to equip herself in Paris with a portable engine, as she was determined that her department should be efficient. On the committee refusing to sanction the expense, she bought it herself. Miss Stoney's action was soon justified, for when the hospital was installed at Gevgheli in Serbia there was no electric supply. Thanks to her engine, not only was this the only British hospital able to work X-rays, but incidentally, as a by-product of the X-ray department, Miss Stoney lighted the entire hospital with electricity. The need of much electric light in the dark winter days meant hard work for Miss Stoney, and the following extract from a letter conjures up a picture of work in no easy conditions:

"The electric light was needed in the pharmacy until the doctors had finished, and it was often late before I could stop the little engine and pack it up warm for the night. . . . When I creaked up the ladders in stockinged feet to the loft where fifty-four of us slept, there could be no thought of washing, with ice already in the jug; it was often an inch and a half thick by morning. Instead of undressing, one piled on every scrap of extra clothes one had, and put one's waterproof under the mattress to stop the draught up through it."

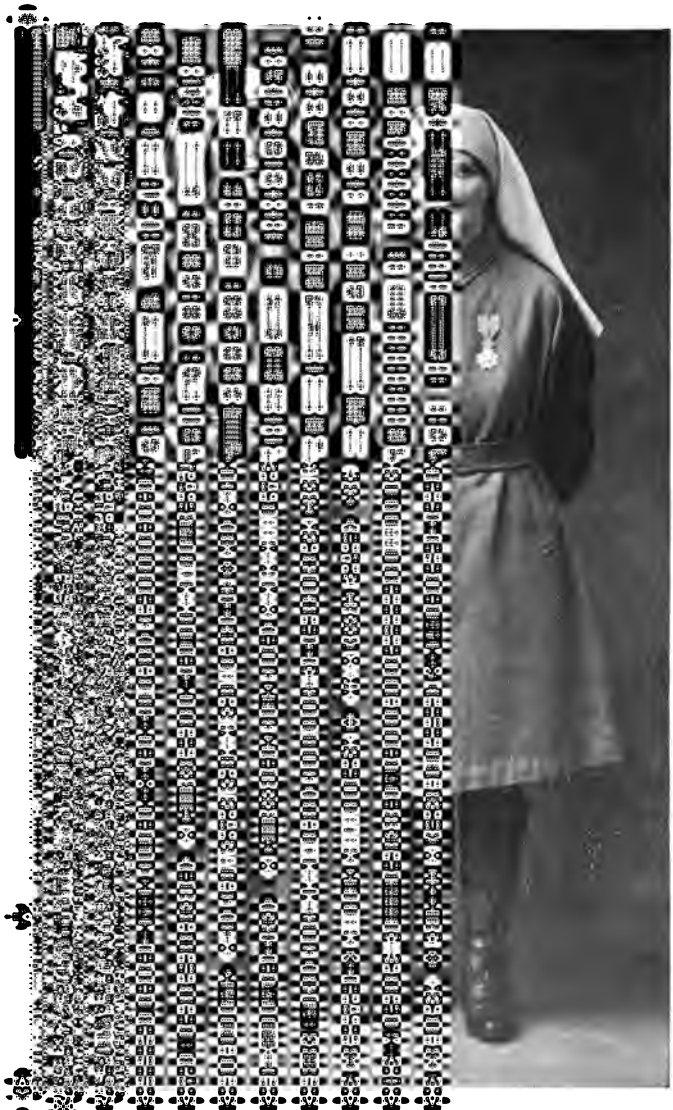
When the French retreated from Gevgheli, a site was found for the hospital just outside Salonika, on a bit of ill-drained, marshy ground. There again the engine proved invaluable. From January 1916 onwards Miss Stoney has run the X-ray department, doing, besides her own work, many radiograms for British and French doctors from other hospitals, who referred their cases to her for examination.

At Salonika Miss Stoney again lit the hospital with electric light. For several months she was obliged to attend to the engine entirely alone, owing to the illness of the only mechanic. She further set up treatment by high frequency for the patients, and radiant heat baths with vibratory massage. Having previously studied the Zander treatment, Miss Stoney was able to instal an apparatus, which, though she describes it as rough, was very successful in treating stiff joints requiring movement. She also used ionisation for healing wounds with beneficial results.

In all these ways Miss Stoney has been able to bring her knowledge of physics to the service of the wounded. She has been a pioneer in her work in this physical department which she has originated

and developed at Salonika. "It is easy to work X-rays," she writes, "when someone else has installed them; but in a moving hospital, in difficult circumstances, physics is a help in getting the apparatus up and working well. We put in order the X-ray outfits of two British hospital ships calling at Salonika. The doctors and mechanics on board had not just the needed physics, but could work the apparatus perfectly well when it was installed."

The Serbian Government has decorated Miss Stoney with the Order of St Sava in recognition of her services. But the reward of her fine work lies in the gratitude of the scores of her patients who owe their renewed health largely to her indomitable energy, and the wonderful ingenuity and resource with which in conditions of abnormal difficulty she has brought so many projects to a successful and practical issue. Writing of her work lately, Miss Stoney says: "There is always sadness, but there is endless variety and interest in the life, and one trusts that the great privilege of easing a drop in the vast ocean of pain, so bravely borne, may have been ours."



MAIRI CHISHOLM.

*To face p. 47.*

## XI

## THE BARONESS DE T'SERCLAES AND MISS MAIRI CHISHOLM

Of all the splendid stories of the war there is none that catches the imagination more than that of the work of Baroness de T'Serclaes (Mrs Knocker, as she was in the early days of the war) and Miss Mairi Chisholm. It is an unparalleled achievement that these two young women should have been living actually up in the firing line ever since the beginning of the war, tending and caring for the Belgian soldiers, dressing and nursing the wounded, and helping the men in the trenches by taking food and hot drinks to them day by day even at the very outposts.

Mrs Knocker and Miss Chisholm (who was then only eighteen) first went to Belgium in September 1914 as members of Dr Munro's Ambulance Corps, and started ambulance work in Ghent and Furnes. From the first their skill and courage were put to the highest test, and it would be hard to imagine greater bravery and devotion than they showed, for instance, in the fierce fighting at Dixmude in October 1914. Mrs Knocker, who is an expert motor-driver, drove an ambulance car to and fro on the road between Dixmude and Furnes under such heavy shell fire that men broke down and were unable to continue driving under the strain of the terrible ordeal. On one occa-

sion the ambulance was required to take some German prisoners as passengers, and, with no other guard but Miss Chisholm, Mrs Knocker drove her convoy along the shell-torn road. "I think it was the proudest moment of my life," she wrote in her diary.

But the work for which their names will live began in November 1914, when the two severed their connection with the Ambulance Corps and started to work together in a little cellar in the ruined village of Pervyse. Mrs Knocker was led to take this step by her conviction, shared by the Belgian doctors, of the necessity of establishing an advanced dressing-post where the severely wounded men might have time to recover from shock before enduring the jolting journey to hospital, which had already proved fatal to many.

Thus it was that these women—the eldest little more than a girl—took up their work. Through all these long months up to the present day they have been living the lives of the soldiers themselves—their quarters for the most part a tiny cellar, again and again under shell fire, sometimes suffering fierce bombardments, not taking off their clothes literally for weeks on end, eating anything they could get, and enduring the trials of cold, dirt, exhaustion, and danger with a gaiety and a courage which have been at once an inspiration and a source of astonishment to those who have been privileged to see them at Pervyse. When the cellar was demolished they moved to another tumble-down cottage, only to be shelled out twice more. But wherever they established themselves it became "home" to the soldiers—their presence bringing a ray of comfort and brightness into the stern routine of life in

the trenches. When in March 1915 a decree was passed by the commanders of the Allied armies in Paris forbidding the presence of any women in the firing line, at the request of the Belgian authorities an exception was made for these two, mentioned by name, who were then officially attached to the Third Division of the Belgian army in the field.

No honour in the war has been better earned than the decoration which King Albert bestowed on each of them, when he appointed them Chevaliers of the Order of Leopold. As if to crown their wonderful story, romance came to one of them in the midst of that shot-torn village. The young widow, Mrs Knocker, recently became the wife of a Belgian officer, Baron Harold de T'Serclaes.

## XII

## LADY MARY HAMILTON, MISS STELLA DRUMMOND, AND THE SKILLED WOMEN MUNITION WORKERS

It is admitted on all sides that the output of munitions achieved by Great Britain since the spring of 1915 has been little less than miraculous, and this result is all the more astonishing when it is recalled that at least 25 per cent. of the men who were engaged in the chemical and engineering trades at the outbreak of hostilities have joined the Army. It was thus essential not only to fill the gaps, but also to augment the supply of available labour, in answer to the increased demand. The women of the Empire at once responded to the appeal for their help. A new and unsuspected reservoir of labour was thus discovered, without which, in the words of Mr F. G. Kellaway, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Munitions), "the Germans would by now have won the war." The extent of the help rendered by women may perhaps be best realised by the fact that there are over 700,000 women engaged in munition work, employed on processes which cover practically the whole engineering and chemical trades. Under the general term "munition work" are included varied forms of work, both skilled and unskilled, undertaken by women, from the heavy

manual labour of loading and unloading trucks of ammunition, to the most intricate and delicate of engineering and electrical operations. To mention only a few of these highly skilled operations, women are building a great part of one of the best high-speed engines in the country, each woman setting her own tools, work which requires considerable technical skill. In the construction of chassis for heavy army lorries and in marine-engine building women are undertaking more and more responsible work. In the delicate work of constructing aero-engines they are turning on centre lathes to a half of a thousandth of an inch. Women are boring and rifling the barrel of the service rifle: they undertake the hydraulic riveting of boilers: they work the electric overhead travelling cranes for moving the enormous boilers of our men-of-war: they are employed extensively on turbine work. "So wide is the scope of women's capabilities," Mr Kellaway stated recently, "that a prominent engineer has expressed his conviction that, given two more years of war, he would undertake to build a battleship from keel to aerial in all its complex detail, entirely by women's labour." And again: "To watch young girls hard at work for twelve hours a day, working on shells, lubricating bullets, handling cordite, making, inspecting, and gauging fuses, examining work where the thousandth part of an inch is a vital matter, running their machines deftly and easily, and spending their days in the danger buildings among explosives with as little fuss as if they were knitting socks, brings a realisation of that which lies behind the list of operations on which women are engaged to-day."

Women's skill on complicated processes has been

acquired with a rapidity which has caused astonishment to experts. Before the war an apprenticeship of five or six years was considered necessary amongst Trades Unions for gaining mastery of some of the processes which women have learnt in a few months or even weeks. In measuring their achievement, however, it must never be forgotten what a debt is owed to British organised labour, which surrendered up in the hour of national crisis many of the legal rights and privileges established only after years of effort and controversy.

The women munition workers of to-day have come from all ranks of society, from every corner of the Empire, many of them entirely unaccustomed to industrial life or manual work, and many unacquainted even with life in England. An incident in one munitions works may be recalled as typical of the rest. Working side by side recently on the machines in a certain factory were a soldier's wife from a city tenement, a vigorous daughter of the Empire from a lonely Rhodesian farm, a graduate from Girton, and a scion of one of the old aristocratic families of England. War has indeed proved a powerful solvent of social barriers, and one of the distinctive features of factory life in munition areas is the excellent leadership of the educated women who have entered the works. Typical of this class of munition workers are Lady Mary Hamilton, daughter of the Duke of Abercorn, and Miss Stella Drummond, daughter of General Drummond. These two friends, girls in years but soldiers in spirit, determined in the early stages of the war to serve their country by making munitions. Accordingly they applied for work as ordinary "hands" in a munition factory, and for some six

months were employed on repetition work in a shell factory. Lady Mary Hamilton has stated that she and Miss Drummond mastered the processes on which they were engaged in a few weeks, but admitted that a victory over the prejudices of the factory employees, inclined to resent the introduction of "swells," was a lengthier task. Soon the skill of the two friends attracted the attention of those in authority, and they were selected for training in more advanced work. They were admitted into the factory school for skilled work, and after five weeks of this training they proceeded to the Government school at Brixton, London. There they followed a nine weeks' course in such advanced work as tool-making and tool-setting—tasks which would not have been considered possible for women workers in pre-war days.

After successfully completing their training, Lady Mary Hamilton and Miss Drummond were allocated to a factory, where they were eventually placed in charge of eight machines each—Wells Turret Capstan lathes. They were then entirely responsible for the output of their machines, which involved responsibility for the workers employed on them. In this "shop" both boys and girls were employed, and the new charge-hands or tool-setters had to "make good" with the mixed staff. They were entirely successful, not only in the setting of the five or six requisite tools in each machine and in the making and grinding of their own tools, but in producing an output which was accurate to within a 200th part of a millimetre. So popular were they as leaders of their staff, that when Lady Mary Hamilton recently resigned her post before her marriage, and Miss

Drummond's services were transferred to welfare supervision under the Ministry of Munitions, the regret expressed by the employees showed that they were losing comrades as well as officers.

There are also countless instances of uneducated women who have found themselves equal to technical work of considerable responsibility. For example, in one factory a woman driver works a 900-h.p. Willans plant. She starts the engine herself if required, watches the voltmeter and regulates the governor accordingly, wipes the commutators and regulates the brushes. This woman was formerly a kitchen-maid, and had no technical experience whatever. Another working woman recently lost the first finger and thumb of her left hand, owing to a loaded gaigne jamming in the press. After an absence of six weeks she returned to work, and is to-day back on the same work and getting an even greater output than before. Public recognition is due to the great army of women munition workers for their courage and endurance, both in the way in which they are facing the dangers incidental to some of their occupations and the monotony entailed in the regular performance of others.

:lfare
the
they

ated
nical
e, in
lans
red,
rnor
ates
ıen-
ver.
ger
gne
eks
me
ıre.
ıen
ce,
ers
he
of

*Swaine.* LADY PERROTT.

*To face p.* 55.

## XIII

## MRS FURSE, G.B.E., R.R.C., LADY PERROTT, R.R.C., AND THE VOLUNTARY AID DETACHMENT

THROUGHOUT the war the services of the Joint Societies of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John have covered a vast area of work for the sick and wounded.

One of the most vital branches of the work has been that of the great army of untrained or part-trained women, who have been supplementing the limited number of trained nurses in the hospitals at home and abroad. Sir Alfred Keogh, the Director General of the Army Medical Service, has explained the scope of their work when describing the organisation of the Territorial Army nursing system. He says: "It was necessary to arrange for the dilution of the nursing services by women who had received some special training, though of elementary character, to afford assistance to the more highly trained nurses. This had been foreseen, for at the time of the formation of the Territorial Army, the training of the civil population to this extent was taken in hand, and voluntary detachments of women in possession of elementary certificates, but receiving continuous training, were formed in the country.

Thus at the outbreak of war there were some 60,000 women in England who had received this training."

For a long period of years the St John Ambulance Association, under the ancient order of St John of Jerusalem, had already controlled a large organisation of ambulance and nursing divisions, and may claim to have originated the teaching of first aid, which has now become the basis of all Voluntary Aid Detachment training. When the scheme was started, detachments were formed throughout the country, in answer to Queen Alexandra's appeal, by the British Red Cross Society, the great new organisation inaugurated by King Edward VII. in July 1905, and also by the Order of St John. Many of the old-established St John Nursing Divisions enrolled at once as Voluntary Aid Detachments, their composition being similar. Shortly after the outbreak of war, the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St John decided to amalgamate their organisation and finances for the period of the war.

The administration of the Voluntary Aid Detachments throughout the country is largely local. Each county has its own system under the central offices in London, and the work of the women, from the county presidents to the humblest workers, has been one of the proudest records of the war. Some Voluntary Aid Detachments have been mobilised in their entirety for service in the auxiliary military hospitals, many of which have been almost entirely staffed and financed by individual detachments. Others are posting their members separately for hospital work elsewhere.

The work of the V.A.D. members besides nursing, includes cooking, storekeeping, and secretarial work,

which are classed under the heading of General Service. This is the branch of work for which Mrs Charles W. Furse, as Commandant-in-Chief of the V.A.Ds. of the Joint Societies, is now responsible. The posting of the V.A.D. nurses to hospitals at home and abroad also goes through her hands. Widow of the well-known painter, and daughter of John Addington Symonds, Mrs Furse was for several years before the war one of the most interested and prominent of V.A.D. workers. When Sir Alfred Keogh's scheme for the organisation of voluntary Red Cross workers came into being in 1909, Mrs Furse was one of the first women to enrol. In 1912 she became Commandant of the first Paddington Detachment, London 128. During the next two years she encouraged enterprise among the members by organising classes in cooking, laundry, and hygiene, in addition to the study of first aid and home nursing. By this time Mrs Furse had become a member of several committees dealing with Red Cross and V.A.D. work, and was already recognised as an authority on these subjects. On the outbreak of war her services were at once commandeered by the British Red Cross Society.

For the first months of war Mrs Furse undertook the management of the Enquiry Department at Devonshire House, which became the headquarters of the V.A.D. In September 1914 she submitted a scheme to the War Office for V.A.D. rest stations on the lines of communication. In October she was ordered to go to France with sufficient members from her own detachment to start this work, which has been much extended, and has met a great need.

In January 1915 Mrs Furse was recalled from France, where the rest-station work was now established, to form a department for the co-ordination of V.A.D. work, and to organise a continual supply of probationers for the military and other hospitals. A selection board was formed at Devonshire House to deal with all applications of V.A.Ds. for service at home or abroad. Mrs Furse's duties also involve periodical inspections in France, where the work has been splendidly carried on by Miss Rachel Crowdy, the Principal Commandant in France. After one of her recent tours of inspection, Mrs Furse reported: "The work of the V.A.D. members in France is a credit to the women of the Empire. Wherever I went I found the same anxiety to keep up the very high standard of work and behaviour set by the organisation. . . . No job is too small for the V.A.D. members, and they good-humouredly fill any gap which appears. The rules and regulations are very strict, and there is but little entertainment. The work is under war conditions, and the members try to show that they can wait till the end of the war for their play-time. Undoubtedly the V.A.D. organisation is proving that women can be trusted in the zone of the armies, and that they have realised the meaning of discipline and appreciate the necessity of discretion."

Many girls who went to France early in the war as practically untrained workers now hold splendid records of service in hospital, and have risen to positions of considerable responsibility. In measuring the scope of what they have accomplished, it must not be forgotten that V.A.D. members are drawn from very varied social positions, a large

proportion being women accustomed to lives of luxury and ease, to whom the hard and often unattractive work has been a new and difficult experience.

Mrs Furse's great foresight into future needs during the earlier stages of the war, the untiring energy and patience with which she prepared for the time when these needs should be recognised, and, above all, her immense personal influence, have proved her to be one of the real leaders whom the war has brought to light. It is largely through her fine personal example of the spirit in which all work should be done that the V.A.Ds. have won for themselves such a good name for keenness and discipline.

Lady Perrott, the Lady Superintendent-in-Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade, is another outstanding woman amongst the small number of workers who had the foresight to prepare themselves and others in peace time for what then seemed the improbable chance of war. One of the most active pioneers of V.A.D. work, Lady Perrott for five years before the outbreak of war worked under the War Office for V.A.D. development and improvement. In 1910 she was appointed Lady Commandant-in-Chief of the St John V.A.Ds. By constantly holding meetings and inspections of detachments all through the country, she helped to standardise the training, and made herself acquainted with every detail of the work. Lady Perrott further performed a splendid service when she induced some of the principal hospitals, both in London and in the provinces, to give facilities for instruction to V.A.D. members. This experience in civil hospitals proved of immense value when war started. In 1913 Lady Perrott

organised a conference on V.A.D. work, which was held at St John's Gate and attended by large numbers of St John V.A.D. officers from all over the country. The effect of this conference was to arouse widespread enthusiasm for the work. Her own personal and detailed knowledge of the detachments stood Lady Perrott in good stead in the stress of the early days of war. When the call came from the War Office for V.A.D. members to serve in military hospitals, the whole organisation for selecting and posting the St John members was in her hands, and she carried out this work with marked success. She also went to France from time to time to inspect. From the beginning Lady Perrott toiled early and late at St John's Gate, and by her great powers of organisation, as well as by her personal influence and untiring zeal, she was able to initiate and carry out an enormous amount of work. Apart from all she has done for the V.A.D., Lady Perrott holds a fine record of achievement. To mention only one of her other activities, it was through her instrumentality that the Board of Matrons was appointed at St John's Gate for the selection of fully-trained nurses, one hundred of whom were sent out to Brussels in the first three weeks of the war by the Order of St John. Lady Perrott has also been largely associated with the St John Ambulance Brigade Hospital, one of the finest hut hospitals in France, for which she has collected a large sum of money, besides organising a special depôt for its supply of stores and comforts.

Lady Oliver is another untiring worker to whose keenness and energy much of the success of the V.A.D. activities is due. As staff officer to Lady Perrott before the war, she was responsible for a

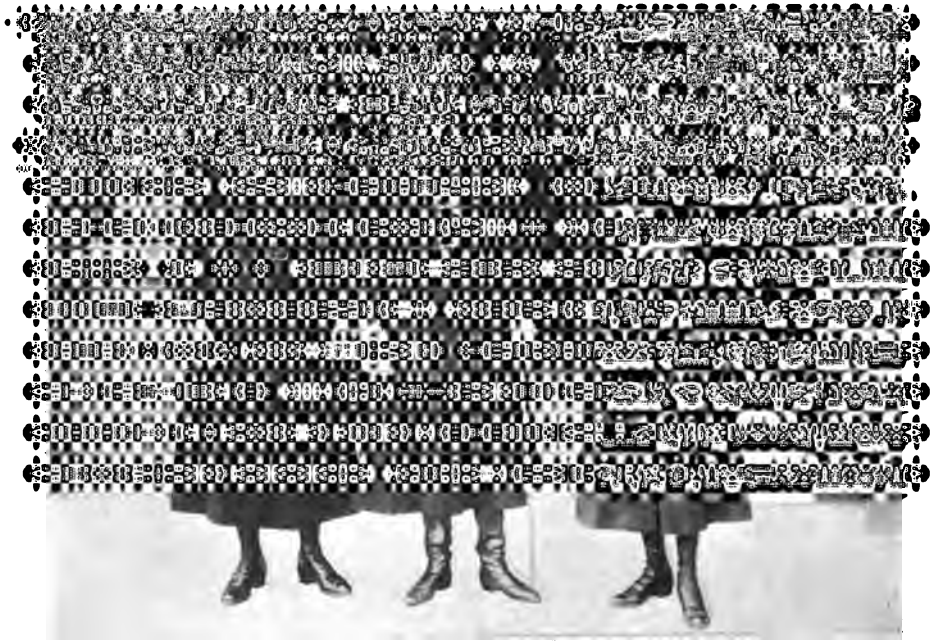
large part of the detailed work. Since the formation of the Joint Department, Lady Oliver has worked with Mrs Furse at Devonshire House. Lady Perrott, Lady Oliver, and Mrs Furse have all been decorated by the King with the Royal Red Cross, and are also members of the Order of St John, Lady Perrott and Lady Oliver being Ladies of Justice, and Mrs Furse a Lady of Grace.

## XIV

## COMMANDANT DAMER DAWSON, MRS CARDEN, AND THE WOMEN POLICE AND PATROLS

THE employment of women for police service, in vogue for some years on the Continent and in the United States of America, has been developed in this country only by the outbreak of the war. Women in uniform are so frequent nowadays that the passer-by scarcely spares a glance for a hard "bowler" kind of hat, plain blue clothes, and a blue armlet with white letters on it. The wearers of this uniform seem to be peculiarly unobtrusive people, anxious to avoid, rather than to attract, attention. For all that, among the innumerable women who are taking on the new work which the times have entailed, the women police are by no means the least valuable, brave, and steadfast.

The names of three pioneers are impressed on the memory of those who have watched the development of this movement in Great Britain: Commandant Damer Dawson, Superintendent M. S. Allen, and Inspector Goldingham. It is largely through their tireless efforts that the Women Police Service, the association that they originated, has now at its command one of the finest bodies of women in the country. The influx of the Belgian refugees in



*Barratt.*

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT M. S. ALLEN. INSPECTOR GOLDINGHAM.
COMMANDANT DAMER DAWSON.

*To face p. 63.*

August 1914 became the starting-point of the movement. While aiding forlorn exiles lost in London byways in the small hours of the night, it was borne in upon Miss Damer Dawson how much work in the streets could be done by an organised band of trained women, armed with authority. The idea took root in her mind and grew with her work. She was soon joined by Miss M. S. Allen and Miss Goldingham, and from that period the Women Police Service may be said to have originated. These pioneers obtained the necessary training and soon set to work in the organisation of a voluntary corps. Recruits flocked in, undertook necessary training in drill, practical and theoretical instruction, and soon obtained positions as officially appointed policewomen. In this capacity they undertake such work as patrolling the streets, attendance at police courts, domiciliary visiting, the supervision of music-halls, cinemas, and public dancing-halls, and the inspection of common lodging-houses.

The need for their services grew steadily. In the summer of 1916 it was found necessary to obtain further control and supervision of the women employees in munition factories, and Sir Edward Henry, the Chief Commissioner of Police, recommended that the Ministry of Munitions should apply to the Women Police Service for a supply of trained women. This request has now created an extensive development, and a new department of the Women Police Service is at present working at high pressure under the Ministry of Munitions. Recruits are streaming in, and are receiving a special training, on completion of which they are drafted to the munition factories. There they undertake multi-

farious duties, including checking the entry of women into the factory; examining passports; searching for such contraband as matches, cigarettes, and alcohol; dealing with complaints of petty offences; assisting the magistrate at the police court; and patrolling the neighbourhood of the factory with a view to the protection of the women employees. In the case of misunderstandings amongst the women employees, the services of the women police have been remarkable, and there are many recorded instances where they have averted strikes in the munition factories, and thus saved the nation from ill effects on output.

In many such ways the women police have proved themselves a valuable national asset. When the war is over, Commandant Damer Dawson and her colleagues will doubtless find that the service they helped to introduce as an emergency measure has become a recognised institution of a new social order.

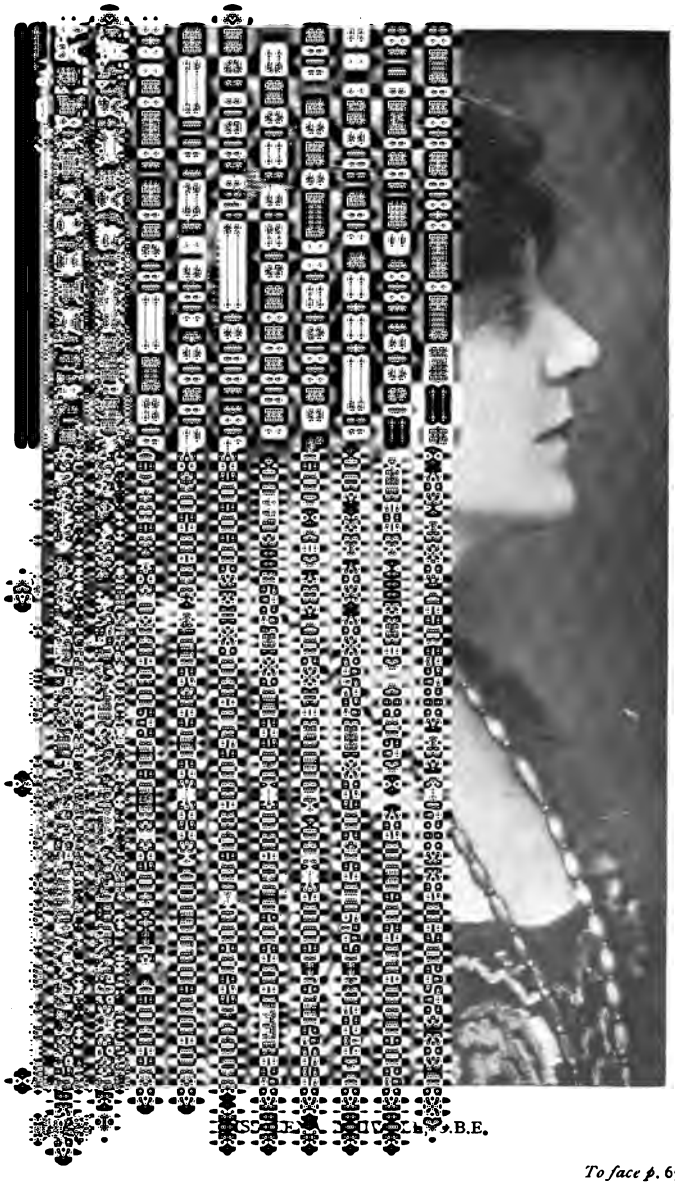
A further service, that of Women's Patrols for the protection of girls in the streets, has originated with the problems connected with the war. Reports from various quarters having reached the National Union of Women Workers as to the dangers caused by the presence of numbers of young girls in the neighbourhood of military camps, it was resolved to organise a body of women of mature age and experience to aid the police in maintaining order. Here again the names of three outstanding women are associated with this work: Mrs Carden, the hon. secretary to the movement; Mrs Creighton, widow of the late Bishop of London; and Lady Codrington, chairman of the London Committee of Women's Patrols. To these pioneers the work owes its initia-

tion and development. A scheme was formulated, welcomed at once by the Home Secretary and the Chief Commissioner of Police, and by November 1914 the Women's Patrols were in working order. Branches were quickly established throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, and there are now over 2000 women working in this connection in different parts of the country. In its initial stages the work was entirely voluntary; but since its efficiency has been established and noted by the authorities, women's patrols have been appointed in various districts and paid at the same rate as men constables.

The main duty of the patrols is to enter into kindly relationship with girls loitering in vicinities where soldiers congregate. Their mission is not to the vicious, or to the "fallen," but to the thoughtless girls, led astray mainly through their excitement at the unaccustomed presence of so many soldiers and by patriotic emotions of admiration and gratitude to the nation's young defenders. The women on patrol aim at getting into touch with such girls and helping them to a healthy employment of their leisure hours. In numerous cases the Patrol Committee have organised clubs in the neighbourhood of the military quarters, these meeting-places being either for girls alone, or "mixed clubs," where the soldiers may bring their girl friends. In the latter case, most careful vigilance and supervision from the patrols are required and given, and success is in most instances attained. This work has been warmly welcomed both by the military authorities and the police, and it is impossible to estimate the unhappiness and suffering that have been prevented by

this provision of healthy recreation in a moral danger zone.

Reports both from the Metropolitan area (where over 400 patrols are now working) and from provincial towns give some measure of the success of the movement. It is significant that during the Irish disturbances of 1916 the Women's Patrols were enabled to pursue their customary tasks, being "passed through" both by the Revolutionary party and by the soldiers.



[illegible] B.E.

*To face p. 67.*

## XV

## MISS LENA ASHWELL, O.B.E.

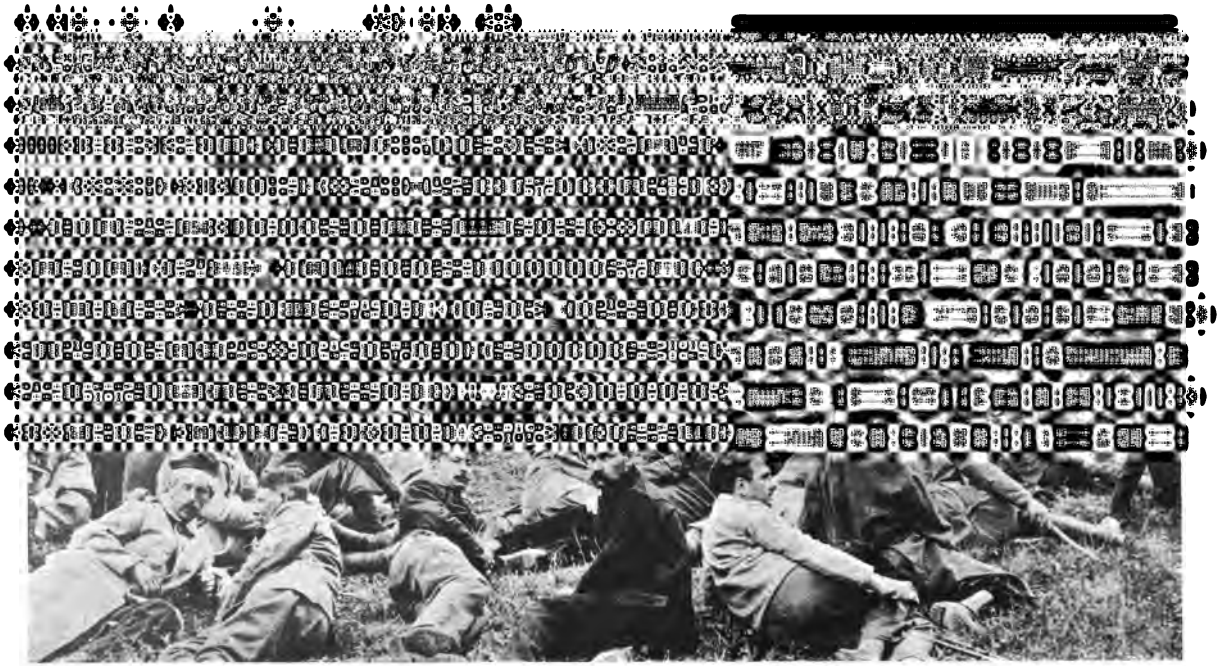
Miss Lena Ashwell's work in starting and arranging concerts at the front has probably given more delight to a greater number of people than the efforts of any other individual woman in the war. The entire scheme was her own, and it is through her untiring efforts and her personal energy that the work has been carried on and extended in a way that is little short of marvellous.

It was in February 1915 that Miss Ashwell was asked by the Ladies' Auxiliary Committee of the Y.M.C.A. to send a concert party to France, and with the goodwill and co-operation of that Committee the work was launched on its successful course. The first party was an experiment in every way, but its reception left no doubt as to the feelings of the soldier audiences. The love of music is enhanced by the alternating monotony and danger of life at the front, and is as fundamental in human beings as the craving for beauty. This instinct is seen, for instance, in the soldiers' touching desire to make gardens wherever they are quartered, and however unpromising the conditions. From Miss Ashwell's tentative effort there has grown up a great organisation, in response to the ever-increasing request from every base, from every camp, from every hospital, and even from the

firing-lines, for more and more concerts. In little more than two years over 5000 concerts have been given in France alone, apart from what has been done in Malta, in Egypt, and in the ships of the Adriatic Fleet. The audiences have been known to number as many as 5000 men, and thus hundreds of thousands are reached every month, and millions during the year.

What are called "permanent" concert parties have been established at five of the bases in France. Each party stays for about six weeks, giving on an average three concerts a day. In the afternoons they usually perform in the hospitals. In the evenings they motor sometimes twenty-five or thirty miles to outlying camps and stations, performing in tents, huts, barns, sheds, railway sidings, or even by the roadside, to all sorts and conditions of men in all branches of the Army.

The request for the concert parties to go up to the trenches and firing-lines soon followed, and this fresh branch of work was undertaken. Only men are allowed to go in the firing-line parties, and the Y.M.C.A. cars convey them on these tours. Concerts have frequently been given under shell fire—sometimes to an audience fully armed and liable to be ordered into the trenches at any moment. Some of the most successful concerts are those for men just leaving the trenches after days of fighting, and here perhaps the music has had its most wonderful effect. It seems to act like magic on the exhausted men, strained almost beyond endurance by the ordeals they have had to face. The spell of horror is broken and their minds are turned away from all they have suffered to thoughts of beauty and happiness. The



*Preface p. 69.*

A MUSICAL ENTENTE BEHIND THE LINES.

existence of the firing-line concert parties is in itself a proof of how much the military authorities appreciate the concerts and their effects. They have been quick to realise that the British Army can stand anything better than being bored. The keenness with which the concerts are anticipated, the touching patience of the men, who will wait for hours in bitter wind and rain—they would rather miss their principal meal than miss a performance,—the discussion for weeks afterwards, all prove how much the music means to them.

At the outset Miss Ashwell determined that the concerts should be up to a high standard. The programmes are varied as much as possible. Classical music, selections from operas, glees, trios, and concertos, the old ballads and folk-songs, are all given, as well as popular rag-times and modern chorus songs. A "concert party" generally consists of a soprano, contralto, bass, tenor, violinist or 'cellist, pianist and accompanist, and often a ventriloquist, conjurer or reciter. "The entertainment given is a mixture of a ballad concert, a recital, and a children's party," writes a member of one audience.

Sometimes plays are arranged, and in the autumn of 1916 Miss Ashwell herself took out a small dramatic company and acted in *Macbeth*, *The School for Scandal*, and some short modern plays. Writing of these performances, Miss Ashwell says: "We gave *The School for Scandal* in a wood, with half our audience on the grass, the other half dangerously overcrowding the branches of the nearest trees. *Macbeth* was given in a great hangar, with Army blankets for the walls of the banqueting-hall, and a sugar-box for the throne. *Macbeth* was

an enormous success. Its reception was wonderful. We gave it to vast audiences; they listened breathlessly in absolute silence, and then cheered and cheered and cheered. . . . There were never such audiences in the world before—so keen, so appreciative, so grateful."

Nothing can be more touching than the appreciation of the concerts in hospital. Here again the spell of the music seems to relax the strain on the men's nerves, and the badly wounded and even dying soldiers beg to hear it, and find comfort in the midst of their suffering. The following is an extract from a letter written by a nurse: "The concert party gave a concert in the orderly room here, and afterwards those kind people came into each ward and sang softly with no accompaniment to the men who were well enough to listen, and the little Canadian story-teller told stories to each man in turn as he was having his dressings done. The result was that instead of being a suffering mass of humanity, the men were happy and amused through the whole of the time that is usually so awful."

Concerts are also given for the medical service and the nurses, for whom these occasional evenings are the only relaxation in a life of strict discipline and unending work.

In January 1916, in response to urgent requests, arrangements were made to extend the work to Malta, and in October 1916 to Egypt; and, as in France, the success has been wonderful. Lord Methuen, the Governor of Malta, wrote to Miss Ashwell recently: "I cannot tell you the value that your concert parties have been to Malta. They have kept the men in hospital cheerful, and I am sure

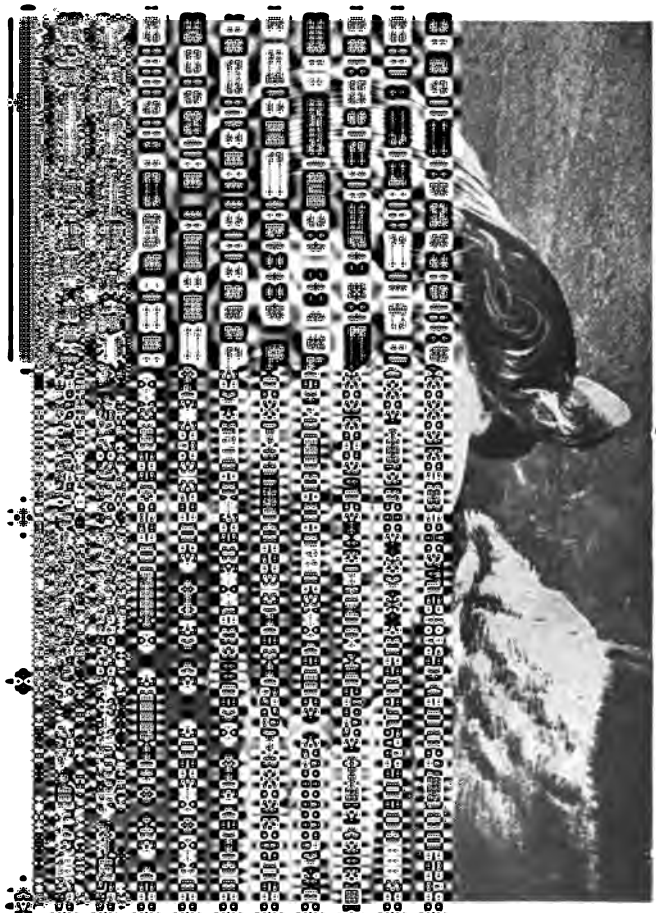
that a great deal of the excellent discipline that has been maintained here is owing to the interest the men have taken in attending your performances."

From Egypt comes another appreciation from General Dobell, who writes: "The Lena Ashwell concert party has given concerts at all posts where it was in any way possible to allow them to go, and the fact that the ordinary rules were waived and special permission granted them to travel where no civilian in any circumstances had previously been allowed to go will make it clear to you how high a value we attach to their entertainments." A touching account was recently given of an incident at a concert in the Sinai Desert. Some soldiers in a camp ten miles away, unable to obtain leave, were so much disappointed that they induced the Royal Engineers to lay some telephone wires, by which means these men in the distant camp were able to listen to the concert. Innumerable letters and testimonies to the success of her work have reached Miss Ashwell from all ranks and all branches of the Army — generals, commanding officers, doctors, chaplains of all denominations unite in saying that the concert parties are accomplishing work of real military value. Countless have been the letters of appreciation from the soldiers themselves. In spite of its rapid and enormous increase, Miss Ashwell has continued to organise the work in a personal and vital way. Not only has she frequently been abroad giving performances herself, but she has personally engaged all the artistes for the parties and has supervised their complicated travelling arrangements. Moreover, she has raised the entire funds to maintain the scheme by addressing

meetings and by making known the work, which has thus been carried on entirely by voluntary contributions.

Miss Ashwell has her thanks in the delight of the thousands who have been cheered and helped by the efforts of the organisation which she has truly made her own. The great message that the music has brought to the soldiers is well expressed by a medical officer who wrote to her recently:

"You do help us by heartening the men up and sending them back to the firing-line happy, and with the feeling that those at home do care, are with them and are trying to help."



MISS C. DLAUTE TIGERSTAN.

To face p. 73.

## XVI

## MISS VIOLETTA THURSTAN

Miss Violetta Thurstan has had a career as varied and adventurous as any nurse during the war, and she has certainly used to full advantage the great opportunities which have come to her.

Trained at the London Hospital, Miss Thurstan was fully qualified to take up responsible work when war broke out, and in August 1914 she was sent to Brussels in charge of a contingent of nurses from the St John Ambulance Association. Arriving just before the capture of the city, she witnessed the historical entry into Brussels of the German army. Some days later, when the German authorities asked for volunteers to nurse at a little town called Marcelline, near Charleroi, Miss Thurstan offered to go, and took two nurses with her, leaving the remainder of her contingent in Brussels hospitals.

At Marcelline Miss Thurstan was in charge of a hospital under the German military command, where she nursed Belgian, French, and German wounded for some weeks under very trying conditions, aggravated by the brutality of the German system of discipline even as regards her own wounded. After a period of work, Miss Thurstan was granted leave of absence from the Marcelline hospital in order to look after the nurses she had left in and near Brussels.

She had some exciting adventures, particularly when trying to find a nurse in an outlying village, where she actually got into the German lines and became involved in an outpost action. By this time the Germans had decided that no English nurses were to be allowed to continue nursing in Belgium; so instead of returning, as she had expected, to the hospital at Marcelline, Miss Thurstan was obliged to spend some weeks of painful and anxious suspense waiting in Brussels, not knowing what fate was in store for her nurses and herself. Finally, together with about one hundred other nurses from different contingents, and some medical men, she was taken by train through Germany to the Danish frontier. During the journey the nurses were subjected to constant insult and humiliation. At Copenhagen, however, these unpleasant experiences were made up for by a cordial reception.

Miss Thurstan was about to return to England when she heard of the great need for trained nurses in Russia, and, after obtaining permission from England to offer her services to the Russian Red Cross, she travelled on from Copenhagen to Petrograd. Miss Thurstan started work at once. After nursing for a time in base hospitals and learning some Russian, she joined a flying ambulance column of motor cars, which moved from place to place at the front. One of the base hospitals in which she was quartered was at Warsaw, where, in spite of the great difference between Russian and English hospital methods, Miss Thurstan managed to adapt herself to the conditions. She was then sent on to Lodz, where she had many adventures in the bombardment. Some idea of the work may be gathered from the fact that in the

Russian retreat from Lodz over 18,000 wounded were evacuated in four days, during which time the nurses worked practically without rest and under terrible conditions.

Miss Thurstan's life with the workers of the motor ambulance unit was remarkable. They were always on the move, and only just behind the front trenches, using any available building as a hospital. At one place they worked in a theatre attached to a hunting-box belonging to the ex-Tsar, and of the work there Miss Thurstan wrote: "The scenery had never been taken down after the last dramatic performance, and wounded men lay everywhere between the wings and drop-scenes. The auditorium was packed so closely that you could hardly get between the men as they lay on the floor." At another dressing station, established near the trenches, 750 patients passed through the hands of the small unit in little over twenty-four hours.

Miss Thurstan was shortly afterwards wounded when attending to soldiers in the trenches; and as pleurisy developed later she had to give up work for a time and come home to England. Before leaving Russia she was awarded the medal of St George "for courage and devotion."

In 1915 Miss Thurstan returned to Russia on work of a different character—to assist in organising the hospital units which were being sent from England to work among the refugees. For three months she travelled all through the country, inspecting the arrangements which had been made in Petrograd, Moscow, Kiev, Kazan, Nijni, and the remote districts to cope with the bewildering influx of over five million dazed and terrified people who fled from

their homes before the great German advance into Russia. As a result of Miss Thurstan's inquiries and the information which she was able to obtain, several units with doctors, nurses, and supplies were sent out to Russia, and have done fine work for the refugees. Help for these unfortunate victims of war was badly needed, for their numbers were so overwhelming and their condition so appalling, that, in spite of the noble effort made by the Russian authorities to cope with such an immense problem, many difficulties connected with the welfare of the refugees continued to arise. Writing of them, Miss Thurstan said: "Verily the English language lacks words to express the suffering that these people underwent, and nothing that we can imagine could be worse than the reality."

On returning to England Miss Thurstan was engaged for a time in organising and secretarial work for the National Union of Trained Nurses. She was then asked to accept the post of Matron at the Hôpital de l'Océan at La Panne in Belgium, where she is still on duty. This hospital has over 1000 beds occupied by patients of Belgian, French, English, German, and even Russian nationality. It is established five miles from the front, so the work is far more acute than is usual in a base hospital, the severest cases being dealt with straight from the trenches.

Miss Thurstan presides over a staff of Belgian and English sisters and V.A.Ds. under Belgian doctors.

Such, then, has been Miss Thurstan's war service—as fine a record of achievement in the cause of suffering humanity as any woman can show. Not the least wonderful fact about her is that Miss Thurstan

is very frail, and has always been delicate. Only her spirit and pluck have carried her through and enabled her to do the hardest work under the roughest of conditions.

Writing of her, a friend says: "There is no doubt that Violetta Thurstan is a woman with a touch of genius and with, as well, a great devotion to work—not an every-day combination. She has determination and courage in an unusual degree, and is gifted with imagination and a deep sense of beauty —nevertheless, she can drudge." Miss Thurstan was recently decorated by the King, in recognition of her devoted services.

## XVII

## H.R.H. PRINCESS BEATRICE, THE HON. LADY LAWLEY, G.B.E., AND THE COUNTESS OF GOSFORD

WOMEN'S share has indeed been magnificent in the work of equipping the hospitals with bandages, garments, stores, and comforts of all descriptions. In the first week of war it is no exaggeration to say that there was hardly a woman in the kingdom who was not making something for the sick and wounded. But organisation stepped in at once to direct and systematise their efforts, and the main work has been carried on under the auspices of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild, and the Joint Societies of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John.

Queen Mary's Needlework Guild was inaugurated the day after war was declared, and, in response to an appeal by Her Majesty the Queen to the women of England, consignments of garments and comforts soon began to flow in. The headquarters of the Guild were established at Friary Court, St James's Palace, under the direction of the Hon. Lady Lawley, who has acted as honorary organising secretary throughout. In the rooms of the old Palace, which formerly glittered with all the splendour of the King's State levées, mountains of garments and hospital necessaries were soon piled up. The organisation has

developed until now it stretches round the world, and the stream of supplies has continued with an ever-increasing volume. In the United Kingdom 470 branches have been formed since the work of the Guild was initiated. From overseas the response to Her Majesty's appeal has been even more remarkable. Seventy branches and many sub-branches have been established even in the remotest corners of the earth, and the work which they have done, and the number of garments which they have sent in to Friary Court, have been no less even than the vast quantities which have been supplied by the workers in the United Kingdom. The number of garments received at headquarters is now approaching five and a half millions, of which over five and a quarter millions have been despatched. A record was established when, in one specially busy week, a quarter of a million garments were sent off. These figures do not include the enormous consignments received at and despatched from many of the branches working on independent lines.

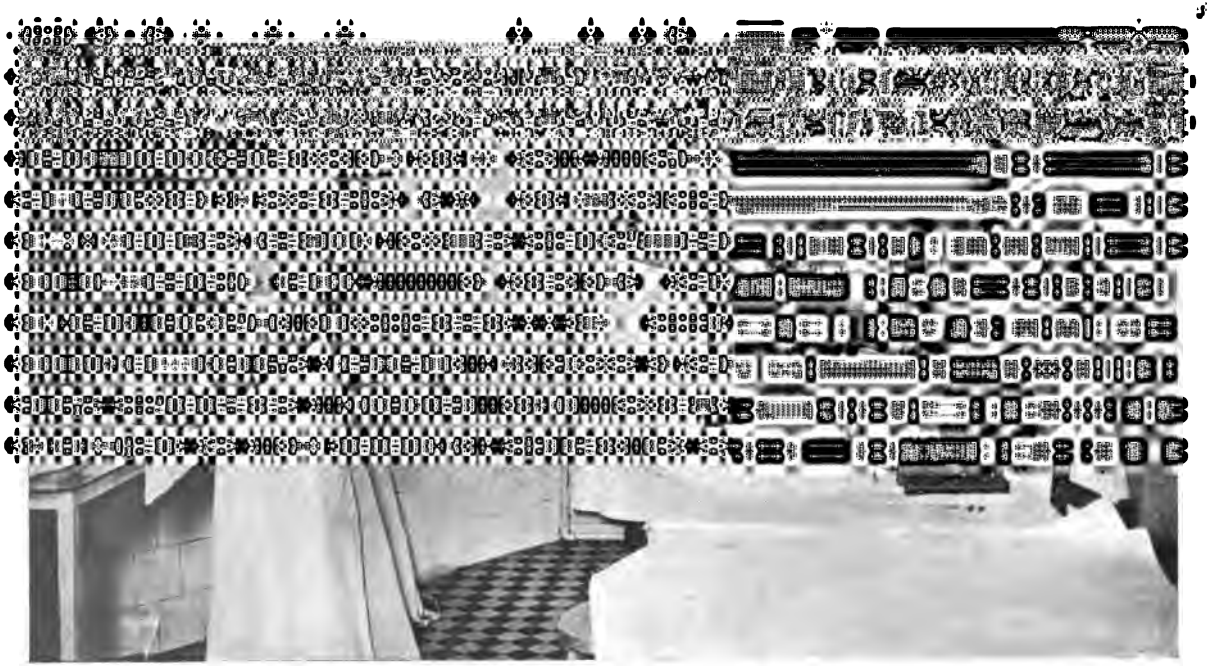
Hospitals at home and abroad, convalescent homes, British military and medical units in Europe, Africa, and Mesopotamia, the Navy, the Allied forces, the Belgian refugees, the Prisoners of War, are some of the recipients of gifts from this great distributing centre at Friary Court, for the sympathies of the Guild are as catholic as its friends and supporters are widespread.

Daily reports of the work are submitted to Her Majesty the Queen, who has thus kept in close touch with all the details of the organisation. Lady Lawley and a large staff of voluntary workers have laboured unsparingly throughout, and are responsible

in a great measure for the ready help which has been granted on so many sides. The following extract from a letter from a high authority in France is a typical tribute: "In this past fortnight the demand has been unprecedented, and I have been able to meet every requirement. I can never be grateful enough to the Guild. . . . I don't think any of us can ever thank the work parties half enough for their very useful help."

The largest surgical branch of Queen Mary's Needlework Guild is at the Central War Hospital Supply Depôt, where truly inspiring work is being done in the making of hospital requirements. The depôt was founded in April 1915 by Miss Ethel M'Caul, R.R.C., who originated and developed the system of work. When at the end of that year Miss M'Caul resigned, H.R.H. Princess Beatrice graciously undertook to carry on the work of the depôt, and appointed Mrs E. H. Gibson as her general manager.

The workers attached to this depôt number 3500, and their service is entirely voluntary. There is no obligation to work for any stated time, but each worker is free to come for as long and as often as possible. Though the majority are part-time workers, there is a nucleus of "steady plodders" who come all day and every day. With woman's infallible instinct of dressing for her part, an optional but universally adopted uniform is worn in the depôt—a white linen overall and a flowing white coif, which give the workrooms a charming and picturesque aspect. Each worker pays a subscription of 1s. a week, which, besides covering the house expenses of the depôt, makes a considerable contribution towards



THE STERILISING ROOM AT THE CENTRAL WAR HOSPITAL SUPPLY DEPÔT.

*To face p. 81.*

the cost of materials and packing. Apart from this maintenance fund, money for the work has been entirely provided by voluntary gifts.

This Central Depôt has been the parent of a great organisation, which has spread throughout the country till now 220 branches have been established in the United Kingdom. Thus the work has grown and extended till there is hardly a town of importance where the host of women who have too many home ties to give themselves entirely to war work may yet devote whatever time they can to making hospital requisites under skilled instruction. The Central Depôt issues patterns to its branches, and only work up to a high standard is passed for the hospitals. Marvels of ingenuity have been evolved in the way of bandages; the modern bandage is constructed with a view to making dressings as easy and painless as possible, and it can be put on with the minimum of movement for the patient. Sterilisation of dressings is a great feature, and all sterilised goods are carefully packed in paper, afterwards hermetically sealed in waterproof cases actually in the sterilising room, thus rendering them ready for immediate use on being unpacked. Visitors cannot help being struck by the professional aspect of the work, whether they are looking at the complicated and beautifully sewn bandages, the well-made garments, or the perfectly packed parcels. Though the workers are volunteers, there is none of that amateur aspect which is apt to be associated with voluntary work.

Altogether many hundred hospitals have been supplied, most of which are in receipt of regular consignments. The branch depôts are encouraged to send their products to local hospitals, but they

also forward a certain amount to the Central Depôt. The output from this depôt last year reached over three million articles, such as bandages, surgical dressings, splints, clothing, and slippers.

Such a successful and invaluable organisation is one of which all the women concerned may be justly proud. The practical assistance of H.R.H. Princess Beatrice, which entails her almost daily presence at the depôt, and actual work in the bandage department, has added greatly to the satisfactory results. The general manager has given silent proof of her own capacity in the achievements of the entire organisation; such work can only be carried on if it is managed with infinite tact, foresight, and energy.

At Mulberry Walk, Chelsea, another depôt is doing particularly helpful work. The special feature of this branch is the department for light splints and supports, made in papier-mâché, to fit exactly the casts of individual patients' limbs, taken by the workers. Some of these women are sculptresses, whose experience in their own profession has accustomed them to the handling of plaster for the casts and the subsequent modelling of the splints. The lightness and perfect fit of these splints make them of the greatest comfort to the wearers, and their beneficial effect has been remarkable.

Under the Joint Societies of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John another great organisation has been established which has its headquarters at the Central Workrooms at Burlington House, where work is carried on under the presidency of the Countess of Gosford. The organisation is divided into four main branches, which include the work carried on actually

at the Central Workrooms, the work of the branch depôts and working parties, the home workers, and the department for supplying patterns.

At the Central Workrooms nearly a thousand voluntary workers have been enrolled, who have produced a total of over 350,000 articles, which include a large proportion of bandages, besides hospital garments. In addition to this, a large number of garments and bandages have been made and supplied as patterns to the working parties; the pattern department has also issued thousands of paper patterns, books, and directions.

Asked to register at the Central Workrooms, and so to form a part of this great national organisation, these working parties, which number over 2000, have established a truly wonderful record. It is impossible to give even an approximate idea of the total of the vast supplies of hospital necessaries which they have produced, but recent returns from only 975 of the working parties over a period of about eighteen months show the astonishing output of nearly five and a half millions of articles for hospital use. Such figures show that women of the country, to whom more conspicuous service has been denied, have indeed achieved miracles of devoted industry. In recognition of their work, the Central Workrooms issues special certificates, and also distributes Government badges, on application by the responsible heads, to members of these working parties who have produced a specified output, and there are to-day close on 40,000 workers who may be justified in showing with pride these tributes of recognition. The scope of these registered working parties is world-wide, and stretches from Portugal to

the West Indies, from Sierra Leone to California, from New Zealand to Panama.

Other contributors to the supplies of the Central Workrooms are the registered home workers, who have produced a great output of needlework, besides innumerable contributions for hospital use of games, books, stationery, musical instruments, etc. Lady Gosford is controlling a department of which she and her helpers may well feel proud, and it is largely owing to the fine stimulus from headquarters that the total records have been so satisfactory.

In a great department in the British Red Cross Society's buildings, weekly deliveries of all the work made and collected by the Central Workrooms are received, together with countless other gifts of hospital comforts from all over the world. Here the miscellaneous collection is sorted and despatched according to the requests from the hospitals by a voluntary staff who have been working under Lady Sophie Scott for nearly three years. The goods are packed and sent not only to the hospitals in Britain and in France, but to all the remoter theatres of war — Malta, Egypt, Salonika, Mesopotamia, Palestine. Besides sending to British hospitals, large gifts have been made to the sick and wounded of the Allies.

At a similar depôt for the receiving and despatch of hospital equipment and comforts, another devoted group of workers under Lady Jekyll has worked at this labour of love since the earliest days of the war, near the ancient buildings of St John's Gate. Here the St John workers of the country send their contributions, and goods of all sorts are despatched to hospitals at home and abroad. The neat shelves

and cupboards contain everything that the sick soldiers may want, from warm bed-jackets and sleeping-suits to tooth-brushes and soap, while extras such as writing materials and games are frequently among the gifts. The Red Cross and St John Depôts each supply a separate group of hospitals, and it is indeed a proud achievement that they have been able throughout the war to keep pace with requirements on such an enormous scale.

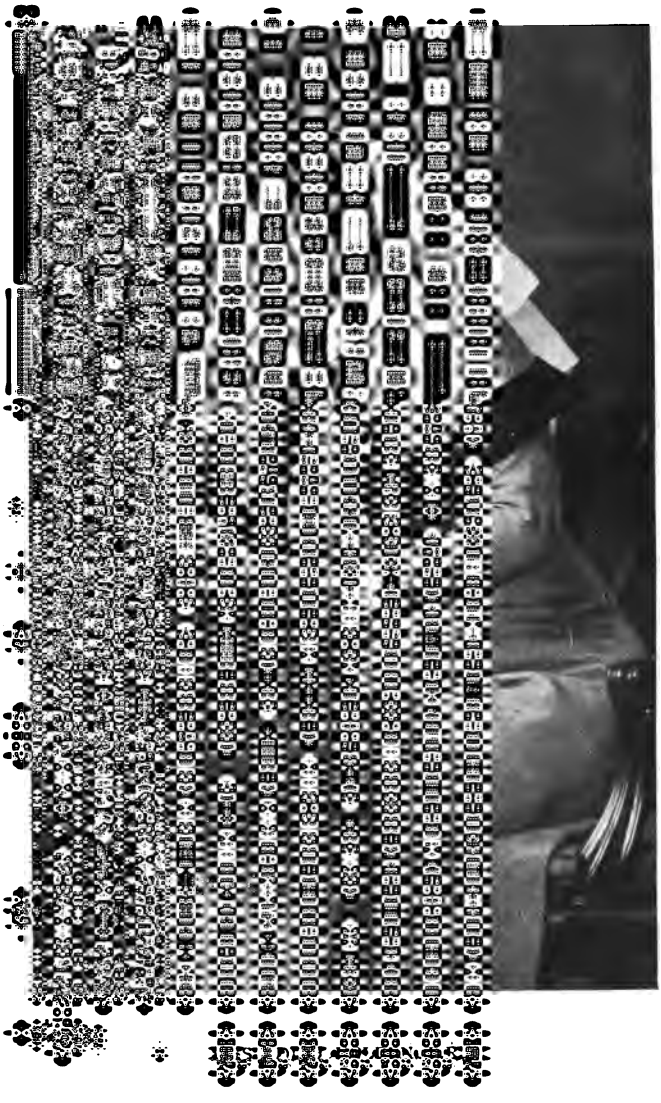
If the complete history ever comes to be written of the work of women with their needles during the war, it will reveal an astounding record of patient, loyal, skilful achievement, and an output of which the figures can only be described as phenomenal.

## XVIII

## MISS EDITH HOLDEN, R.R.C.

"I WONDER if patients entering the receiving-hall of this hospital realise how much they owe to the Lady of the Lamp, whose statue has been lent us for the war?" Colonel Bruce Porter, in command of the Third London General Hospital, Territorial Forces, wrote the above recently in an appreciation of Florence Nightingale and the great sisterhood of nurses which she founded. From the original 125 nurses—the total under her control by the end of the Crimean War—has sprung the wonderful organisation which is nobly carrying on the noblest of all woman's work.

To see one of our great military hospitals to-day is indeed an inspiring sight. To walk through the bright, airy wards, to glance into the spotless theatres, to watch the preparation of appetising meals in the big kitchens, and to examine some of the modern scientific developments, induce a sense of deep interest, in which emotions of pity and sympathy are overwhelmed in the predominant atmosphere of thankfulness and hope. But it is not till a visitor has been privileged to enter Matron's office and to be shown, in the beautifully kept ledgers, the system of organisation, that a true understanding can be reached of how it is that the work of this great hospital seems to run so smoothly, and with none of the restlessness



*To face p.* 86.

and bustle which are associated with undertakings on a large scale.

Miss Edith Holden has been Matron of the Third London General Hospital since August 1914. One of the biggest military hospitals in the country, it contains over 2000 beds, of which 550 are for officers. It is certainly the largest collection of beds controlled by one matron, for in other of the larger military hospitals the patients are in different buildings, each containing several hundred beds, and having its own matron, though all under one commanding officer. The original building was the Royal Victoria Patriotic School for Soldiers' Orphans, but as the hospital has increased a town of wooden huts has sprung up around the central stone edifice. Miss Holden had had considerable hospital experience in peace time, having been matron at the Richmond Hospital, Dublin, and assistant matron at Chelsea Infirmary. To her skill and power of organisation much of the success of the hospital is due. She presides over a staff of women numbering 520, which includes fully trained nurses, V.A.D. probationers, women orderlies, clerks, cooks, and scrubbers; and if she had no other duties, the control of this department alone would be a fair day's work. The standard of nursing expected at the base hospitals in England is considerably higher than abroad, where the patient often feels he is merely resting on his way home. "Bed-sores are not always avoidable abroad," writes a well-known Army doctor, "but they must never occur in a hospital in England." The shortage of trained nurses makes the maintenance of this high standard no easy matter. "We have only two-fifths of the number of trained nurses laid down in the establishment as authorised by the War

Office Schedule before the war," Miss Holden stated recently, and even this nucleus is liable to be drawn upon for foreign service. This involves considerable strain on the Matron and her assistants.

There remains as supplementary staff the great band of untrained V.A.D. workers, from amongst whom the more experienced probationers are constantly transferred abroad. Miss Holden was one of the first matrons to welcome V.A.D. helpers at the beginning of the war, and the care which she has bestowed on rendering them efficient and skilful nurses has been one of the most helpful factors in the smooth working of the hospital.

Another of Miss Holden's multifarious duties is the responsibility of catering for the officer patients and the women's staff. The management of this branch of the work demands brains as well as imagination. While the soldiers must receive the dainty diet which sick men need, food supplies must be closely watched, wastage avoided, and expenditure controlled. The happy and human atmosphere of the hospital speaks volumes for the personality of those in authority. Every aspect gives evidence of deep thought, sympathy, and understanding for the welfare of the sick soldiers. The spirit of progress is felt on all sides. To give only one instance: several of the masseurs in attendance are soldiers blinded in the war, who have been trained for this work, "and," says the commanding officer, "after the war no one must employ any other masseurs but blind soldiers." A wonderful new branch of work is the facial department. Lieut. Derwent-Wood by the use of metal plates has achieved miracles of restoration for those most unhappy of all maimed soldiers who suffer from

apparently hopeless disfiguring facial wounds. He uses his skill as a sculptor to model these masks for cases in which surgery cannot restore the missing part.

Yet a further and very human branch of the Matron's special, though unofficial, activities is the care of the relatives who are sent for by the medical officers to see the dangerously ill cases. These unfortunate people arrive, many from remote parts of the country, never having been in London before; and the Matron has made it her duty to find accommodation near the hospital to which they can be sent.

The story of the Matron's day is an endless chronicle: ceaseless care for the critical cases under her charge, a hundred daily problems to be solved in organisation of personnel, stores, equipment, not forgetting entertainments, which form a great feature. Besides coping with the daily round, she must always maintain an open mind for fresh ideas and arrangements and new experiments in nursing. Above all, she must keep the serenity, rapidity of decision, firmness, and sense of humour which are essential in her responsible office. Miss Holden manages to combine these qualities—she is a woman who must be obeyed without question, but who may yet be approached by the humblest worker in the hospital with the certainty of finding sympathy and justice.

Work in a base hospital is perhaps the most unselfish of all hospital work to-day. There is none of the excitement and constant change of the work nearer to the front; day by day the routine of the wards goes on, unceasing in its calls on body and mind, unending in its responsibility, demanding and

receiving in its fulfilment the best that women know how to give.

Colonel Bruce Porter paid his women workers a well-earned compliment when he reported recently: "Since the early days of the war the standard of nursing and care of the wards has been maintained by means of the loyalty of the reduced staff to their chiefs, and the whole of the women here have been and are magnificent. To keep this big crowd of women workers at their best could only be done by a woman of exceptional ability, and I am fortunate in having that type of woman as my matron."

see p. 91.

## XIX

## MRS GASKELL, C.B.E., AND THE HON. MRS ANSTRUTHER

THE supply of literature to our soldiers has been an undertaking of gigantic proportions. It was a woman who in the first few days of war had the insight and imagination to realise the part that books would play in the soldiers' lives, and the organisations for their supply which have grown up to keep pace with the ever-increasing demand have been carried on almost entirely by women workers. The collection and distribution of books to the troops is now undertaken mainly by four organisations. The Camps Library works under the War Office to supply the troops quartered both at home and in every theatre of war abroad. The War Library of the Joint Societies of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John supplies the sick and wounded soldiers in hospitals, hospital trains, and hospital ships. The Chamber of Commerce supplies the Grand Fleet, and the British and Foreign Sailors' Society sends to the merchant ships and smaller ships.

The need for books in hospitals speaks for itself, while for our fighting men reading is often the only form of recreation. In the various theatres of war abroad they are entirely dependent for reading matter on what may be sent to them from home. The need

for light literature and fiction is endless, to turn their thoughts from the horror or the monotony of war.

The ways in which the books are obtained are many and varied. After some months of war, the question of keeping up the supply for distribution by the libraries became a momentous one. At first the newspaper appeals brought in many thousands of volumes, financial contributions for buying books were sent, and generous gifts were received from publishers. But these supplies could not continue indefinitely on a sufficiently large scale. A wonderful solution to the problem came in August 1915.

The Postmaster-General (Mr Herbert Samuel) was struck, on visiting some of the camps and on seeing the men in the trenches, by the great value to them of the books already sent out. It occurred to him that the post-offices of the country might be used to become collecting depôts for the Libraries, and in consultation with Colonel Sir Edward Ward and the Hon. Mrs Anstruther a scheme was evolved by which anyone could hand a book or magazine, unwrapped and unaddressed, over the counter of any post-office in the kingdom for the benefit of our soldiers. The collections thus made are divided in agreed proportions between the four societies already mentioned.

The War Library started work quickly. In the first week of the war, Mrs Gaskell, her brother, Mr Beresford Melville, and a small group of friends, made an appeal in the newspapers for literature for the sick and wounded. This was the first of all the great war appeals. The response was so rapid and so overwhelming that, even in the large house lent by Lady Battersea for the accommodation of

the books, problems of space and of methods of distribution at once arose. But a satisfactory system was quickly evolved, and with the assistance of Dr Hagberg Wright, librarian of the London Library, it has developed into an organisation of clockwork perfection.

Started entirely as a private undertaking, the War Library reached such proportions that by November 1915 it was considered advisable to affiliate it to the Joint Societies of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John, thus ensuring financial support and official facilities of distribution. The work, however, has been carried on throughout by Mrs Gaskell and a voluntary staff of women helpers, whose duties include the unpacking and sorting of the books; the cleaning and mending of soiled and torn copies; the selection of books by a careful system which ensures that each package shall contain a choice of books and magazines to suit varied types of readers; and the packing, addressing, and despatch to the hospitals. Under the present arrangements 1810 hospitals are supplied in England and a fortnightly consignment of books is sent to 272 hospitals in France, besides the cross-Channel hospital service and hospital ships for the Colonies and foreign service. Hospitals in East Africa, Bombay, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Salonika, and Malta receive every month thousands of books and magazines, the continuous supply travelling smoothly to its destination of ambulance, casualty clearing station, or base hospital. Under the post-office scheme, several thousand books, papers, and magazines are received weekly, but in addition many gifts of books are sent direct to the War Library. There is also

a large department of the War Library for the purchase of new books to mix with those given. A touching and remarkably successful feature, a suggestion of Mr Rudyard Kipling, is a thin scrap-book for men who are very ill, made by devoted helpers amongst the public, in answer to a special appeal. A small department for games and puzzles has also been started in response to urgent requests from the hospitals.

Efforts are always made by the workers at the War Library to meet the individual needs of special cases brought to their notice, and this personal touch with patients in hospital is of infinite value. Men with long months of life in bed before them have been enabled, by means of the books thus provided, to study for particular professions and trades. "It is our special boast," says Mrs Gaskell, "that no request for literature has ever been refused by the War Library, even to selecting and packing 20,000 books in twenty-four hours, or again such a request as we had from no less than three Colonial hospitals, who asked for the *Encyclopædia Britannica* in forty volumes!"

The effects of the work of the War Library are so far-reaching as to be incalculable. It is safe to say that no small group of women, such as Mrs Gaskell and her helpers, can have done more throughout the war to cheer the lonely and depressed, to amuse and interest the weary, and to turn the minds of men in pain to fresh channels which help them to forget their suffering.

The work of the Camps Library was started in October 1914, and now consists of the colossal task of providing a systematic and regular supply of

literature to the whole of the British Army. No application is necessary—a box or bale, varying in quantity according to the number of men, is sent out automatically about once every month or six weeks to every unit—however small—in every theatre of war. The scheme was originated by Colonel Sir Edward Ward, when making arrangements for the reception of the Overseas troops on Salisbury Plain. He then saw how necessary it was for the men to have books and magazines, and he asked the Hon. Mrs Anstruther to assist him in forming libraries for the use of the men in their leisure hours, to relieve the monotony of the long evenings in isolated camps. From this comparatively small beginning the present system has grown up, and now every commanding officer can form a lending library of bound books for the use of his men, in every camp or regimental institute at home or abroad. These libraries of bound books are in addition to the bales of general literature which go out from the Camps Library to all units serving with the British Expeditionary Force, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and the Indian Expeditionary Force. Each box or bale contains the greatest possible variety of literature, from a classic or standard novel to the most highly coloured penny novelette. Magazines and picture papers are always included—in fact, there is in each box sufficient variety to suit all tastes. Books and magazines are passed from unit to unit—till they literally fall to pieces, for the life of a book under war conditions cannot be a long one,—and the request for "more" is loud and persistent.

Besides these automatic consignments, special applications may be made by the chaplains of all

denominations attached to the armies in every theatre of war, who then receive for distribution fortnightly boxes in England or France, or monthly bales on the remoter fronts. The Camps Library also supplies light literature to those soldiers whose need is greater than any others'—the prisoners of war; and large libraries have been formed at most of the prisoners' camps in Germany. Prisoners' literature is further supplied under the Board of Education, which has started a special department for sending them books on educational and technical subjects, and prisoners' individual requests are dealt with there.

When it is realised that since the beginning of the war over 9,000,000 publications have been handled at the Camps Library, some idea of the scope of the work may be gained. It speaks worlds for Mrs Anstruther's powers that she has been able to establish a smooth-running organisation on such a gigantic scale, but she and her helpers are more than rewarded for their efforts in the realisation of how much their work has meant to the soldiers. Appreciation and thanks pour in from all parts of the world. The reception of the books can be best described in a soldier's own words: "It was a very wet day, and most of the men were lying or sitting about with nothing to do. When I said I had a box of books to lend, they were round me in a moment like a lot of hounds at a worry, and in less than no time each had got a book—at least, as far as they would go round. Those who hadn't been quick enough were trying to get the lucky ones to read aloud. It would have done you good to see how the men enjoy getting the books. . . . Can we have more, as many more as you can spare?" Another officer

writes: "My battery has been in action since the beginning of November 1914, and I can honestly say that no enterprise, public or private, has helped us more to keep the men amused and contented than the books sent by the Camps Library." Letters such as these are eloquent testimony to workers whose labour has accomplished such a fine achievement.

## XX

## MISS LILIAN RUSSELL AND MISS ALICE BROWN

Miss Lilian Russell and Miss Alice Brown are amongst the ladies who are working in one of the branches of the Y.M.C.A. work in France—the hostels for the relatives of the wounded. The medical officers in the various hospitals in France are empowered to telegraph to the parents, wife, or sweetheart of any soldier whose condition they consider critical. At the request of the military authorities, the Y.M.C.A. undertook nearly two years ago the work of meeting, housing, and caring for the relations during their stay. The sight of their own people has undoubtedly saved the lives of many patients by reviving their desire to live, even in cases which the doctors had thought to be hopeless.

Many women are giving themselves with the utmost devotion to the work of managing these hostels. The following accounts are given as typical workers' experiences.

Miss Alice Brown and her sister, Mrs Ballantyne, have been in charge of a hostel for many months, and no more poignant human experience can be imagined. At the end of ten months over 1200 people had stayed with them, though there is accommodation for only about twenty people at a

time. Miss Brown and Mrs Ballantyne look after their visitors entirely during their stay, and with two or three voluntary helpers they keep the house and cook for a household which sometimes numbers fifty. Writing of her life at the hostel, Miss Brown says: "We have all our meals with our visitors, and family prayers after breakfast bring a quaint and cosmopolitan household together. They come from all parts of Great Britain and Ireland. There are also wives who have followed their husbands from Canada to England, and brothers of New Zealand and Australian boys who have been sent straight down from the line. They stay with us as long as the O.C. at the hospital thinks necessary. The patients are not usually told that their relations are coming until they are actually on the spot, and then great are the joys of meeting."

Sometimes visitors have stayed with Miss Brown at the hostel for many weeks, and on one occasion a baby was born there, whose mother had come out to see her badly wounded husband.

From time to time there come the tragedies of the relations who arrive too late, and then it is that the ladies of the hostels can comfort and befriend these poor stricken people, go with them to the military funeral, and help them to return to England. Indeed it is mostly sad work, for the relatives are sent for only in the very dangerous cases, and sometimes they stay on through weeks of anguish and suspense; but Miss Brown strives to keep up an atmosphere of cheerfulness and courage, following the wonderful examples from the hospital wards, and there is an unwritten law in the hostel that no one must break down. As an illustration, Miss Brown

once described an occasion when she found a girl sobbing bitterly in the hostel sitting-room. On asking what was the matter, she was told that the girl's brother was to have his foot amputated. "Oh, that's nothing," said Miss Brown, and was astonished afterwards, when she had comforted her visitor, at what must have seemed heartlessness on her part; but the loss of a foot is indeed nothing as compared with many cases.

Miss Russell's work is somewhat different in character, for the hostel which she manages is at one of the chief bases, and is the clearing station at which all the relatives coming to France arrive. From this base they are then posted on to the various hospitals, some having to be sent eighty miles by motor. The work here is very strenuous, for it means perpetual comings and goings, and there are always twenty to thirty relatives resident at this hostel, besides those who pass through. The workers can never, at any hour of the day or night, feel safe from fresh arrivals, for whom food and accommodation have to be provided pending the uncertain departures of boats and trains. Miss Russell reports that in most cases the relatives are touchingly grateful. A welcome for all who come is never lacking, but the work of hostel helpers is exhausting, physically and mentally, and relentless in its demands on their sympathy. One of Miss Russell's privileges is a permit giving her the entry into all the hospitals, so that she is able to keep in touch with some of the soldiers after their people have returned, if they are, as she says, "homesick, and in need of a little extra spoiling." In a letter to a friend she writes: "The opportunities this bit of one's work gives are inestimable, and the example of

the patient, faithful work the sisters do is the greatest help and comfort. Everything, I think, pales before their glory—second only to that of the soldiers in courage, sacrifice and devotion. As to the men themselves, I can't write of what they almost all are—how self-forgetful, modest and unselfish down to the very gates of death."

To those who wait in the shadow of suspense and anxiety which hangs over so many English homes, it is indeed a consolation to know that, if their soldier should be lying in danger, his own people will be able to go to him. This privilege is available for rich and poor alike, the Government being responsible for the cost of their journey and visit, however long the relations may stay.

## XXI

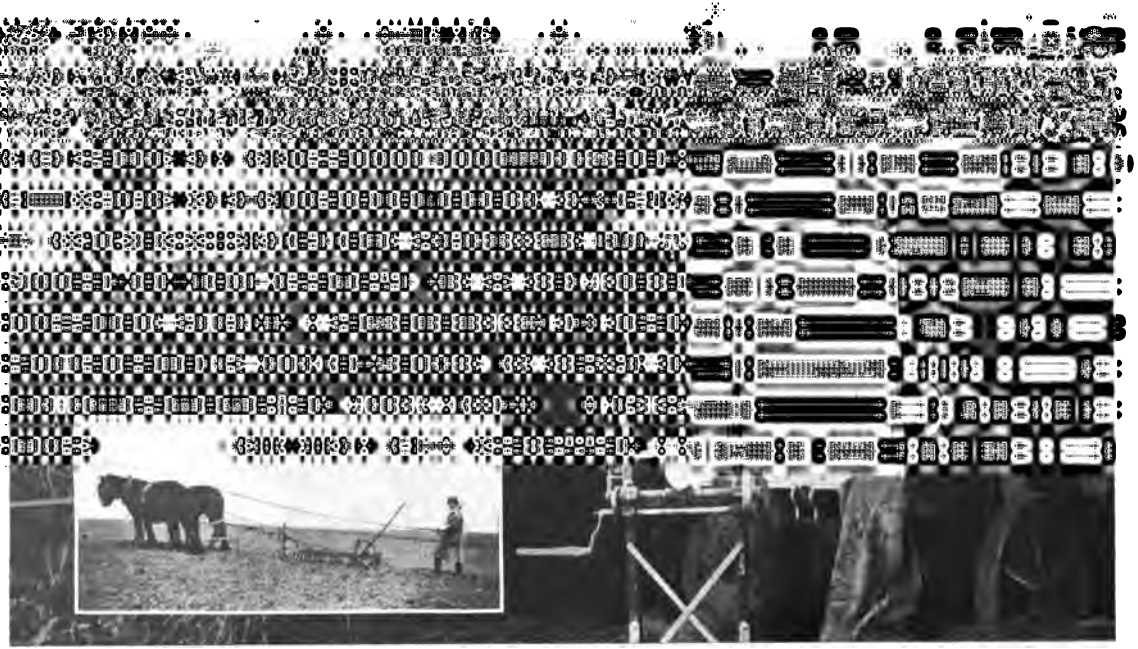
## MISS DOROTHY MATHEWS AND MISS URSULA WINSER

At a great women's meeting held recently in London, Mr Prothero, the Minister for Agriculture, used the following words:

"I do not pretend that work on the land is attractive to many women. It is hard work—fatiguing, backaching, monotonous, dirty work in all sorts of weather. It is poorly paid, the accommodation is rough, and those who undertake it have to face physical discomforts. In all respects it is comparable to the work your men-folk are doing in the trenches at the front. It is not a case of 'lilac sunbonnets.' There is no romance in it: it is prose."

But in spite of all the difficulties which agricultural work presents for women, they are taking it up in ever-increasing numbers, in view of the country's necessity. The success of women in agriculture is largely due to a splendid organisation, the Women's National Land Service Corps, formed privately, but now working in close co-operation with the Government departments. This corps first advertised the necessity for the employment of women on the land, and initiated opportunities for their training on a large scale.

Miss Dorothy Mathews and Miss Margaret Hughes



*Alfieri.*

WOMEN ON THE LAND: (1) MOTOR THRASHING-MACHINE; (2) MISS MATHEWS WITH A CULTIVATOR.

are two typical workers, educated women used to comfortable surroundings, who have come forward to fill the places of the men who have gone to fight. Miss Mathews and Miss Hughes are engaged in the heaviest forms of agricultural work, which, however, they report to be quite within the power of women. The healthy outdoor life and the work itself naturally tend to increase strength, "and," said Miss Mathews recently, "we are astonished at the ease with which we do things that seemed almost impossible some months ago."

The usual farm day starts with milking, and when this is done the serious work begins, varying according to the season of the year. The field work is of course the heaviest, but Miss Mathews and Miss Hughes each takes out her own team of horses for ploughing and harrowing, and as they are working in a very hilly part of the country, in Herefordshire, this is exceptionally hard. Writing to a friend recently, Miss Hughes said: "On our first morning at the farm we were put straight on to ploughing a field up on the hills, with a glorious view across the Wye Valley and right on to the Malvern Hills. Happily, we managed quite well, though we were in a 'blue funk,' having only our one month of training-college experience to go on. We went on ploughing practically every day, and our last piece of work before the frost set in was to help plough up an eight-acre piece that had been under grass for eleven years—it was a business!"

As well as ploughing and sowing the fields, these girls do manure carting and spreading, grinding, and root-pulling. They also groom the horses, mix the food, feed the stock, and clean out the cowsheds and stables. Describing another branch of her work

recently, Miss Mathews wrote: "During the severe weather we had a strenuous time thrashing. All hands were requisitioned, and the engine was kept going from 7.30 a.m. till 6 p.m., with only an hour's break for lunch. This, of course, meant very hard days and long hours, not to mention the dust. Miss Hughes and I were put on to pitching from the rick, and mighty strenuous work it is. It was amusing to discover that we had the most tiring job; naturally there wasn't a rush for it by those who knew." In addition to their farm work, Miss Mathews and Miss Hughes do their own cooking and housework; therefore they are really doing a man's work outside, but without the prepared meal and the immediate rest that most men can look forward to after work.

Another branch of agriculture which women are beginning to take up with success is work with heavy motor tractors.

Miss Ursula Winser and Miss Mollie Jameson are good examples of women who do this sort of work. These girls have been driving a tractor-plough in Shropshire. They volunteered for the work at a time when the local farmers were in despair at their inability to use the only tractor in the district, the last available driver having been called up for military service. The girls had had some experience of motors, Miss Winser having been "chauffeur and odd man" when working as a V.A.D. in a hospital at the beginning of the war. She was not accustomed, however, to a type of car of which the starting-handle alone weighs many pounds. Moreover, in order to be taken along a road from one field to another, a tractor requires to have the "spuds" taken off the wheels. These are strips of steel, put on with two

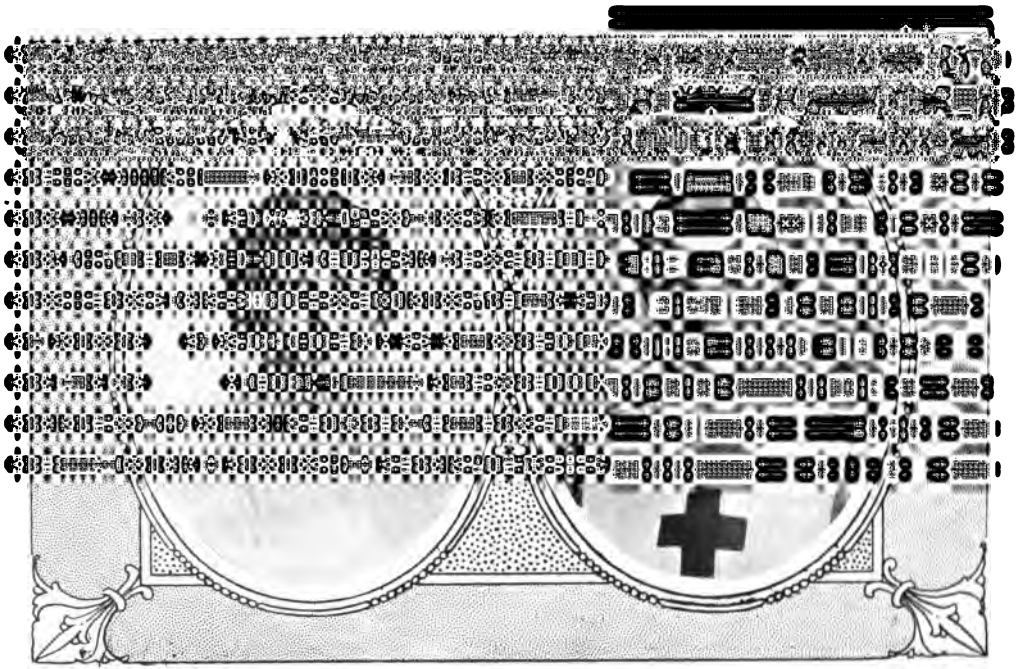
bolts and nuts each, and there are twelve spuds on each wheel, usually thickly covered with mud and oil, so their removal is no drawing-room job. But Miss Winser and her friend were not to be daunted. In spite of their lack of experience, and further hampered by a large audience, which assembled, in a spirit inclined to mockery, to watch their efforts during their first days of work, they ploughed on in the most literal sense, conquering their difficulties and gradually acquiring mastery over the tractor. Miss Winser and Miss Jameson take the work of driving the tractor and managing the plough by turns, the former being very hot and the latter very cold work. They have now worked the tractor for some months, taking it over considerable distances to farms all through the district. They are able to plough from four to five acres of land in a day, and have recently started training some of the local girls in this work.

## XXII

## MISS EVELYN LYNE AND MISS MADGE GREG

In addition to their great hospital work, the Joint Societies of the British Red Cross and the Order of St John have established many of what may be called the additional links in the long hospital chain which stretches with such perfect organisation from the spot where the soldier is wounded on the battle-field to the point where he is able to return with renewed strength to duty. The accounts which follow of the experiences of two workers illustrate the similar lives of many other "V.A.Ds."

Miss Evelyn Lyne went to France in October 1914 as cook in the first Voluntary Aid Detachment to be sent abroad. The detachment was to start a rest station at one of the base railway stations for feeding and re-dressing the wounded as they came through in the hospital trains from the front. A series of railway luggage-vans drawn up on a siding had to serve as the headquarters of the detachment, which Miss Lyne described as follows: "We had very hard work and great fun scrubbing and disinfecting the vans; they looked beautiful when finished, and were equipped as a kitchen, dispensary, dressing station, store-room and common room respectively. No one would believe what a charming kitchen a railway



MISS EVELYN LYNE. MISS MADGE GREG.

*To face p. 107.*

truck made. Besides the kitchen we had a very long fire burning between old railway lines arranged at the right distance to support the huge pots for making cocoa, six pots at a time, so that we could have enough for 300 boiling at once. We worked day and night at the rest station in twelve-hour shifts, and, being a humble cook, it was my lot to stand for hours over the fire stirring cocoa, sometimes in the pouring rain, and with smoke belching into my eyes." As a rule the rest-station workers were given only an hour's warning of the arrival of a hospital train, and then had to prepare food for from 300 to 800 wounded men. When the trains came in, the workers would take their cauldrons of cocoa or soup and baskets of food on handcarts to the carriages. "No words can ever express how splendid the wounded men were," wrote Miss Lyne: "one never heard a complaint, and we were so thankful to be able to do just that little for them."

Later Miss Lyne was sent to cook for between eighty and ninety nurses at their billet in an old château at one of the hospital bases. This was hard work indeed, for she was the only cook, and had eight meals a day to serve. The nurses were on Army rations, so a whole sheep or the quarter of a bullock would be left at the door daily, and Miss Lyne soon became an expert butcher! When later she had to return to England she wrote: "I shall always look back on those days in France as the happiest time of my life." She is now working as an inspector of hostels under the Ministry of Munitions.

Miss Madge Greg has been doing rest-station work since January 1915, and has been quartered at various stations on the lines of communication.

Starting a new station entails hard work, and the workers need to show resource and quickness, and the ability to adapt their arrangements on the instant to existing conditions, however inconvenient and uncomfortable they may be. Railway trucks or a goods shed have had to be transformed in a few hours into a spotlessly clean dressing station, where men could be brought from the improvised ambulance trains to have their wounds re-dressed.

On one occasion the unit with which Miss Greg was working received a message that unexpected special trains were on their way, and could not be drawn up at the existing rest station. Within an hour the workers managed to get their stores and apparatus moved round to another part of the line. "And," writes Miss Greg, "by 7 a.m. we had everything in readiness within the new dressing station, and ten boilers of hot cocoa out near the trains. There followed days and nights of continuous hard work, and more trains than ever before—this was our experience of the battle of Loos."

With time the rest stations were housed in proper huts, and also, as the number of fully-equipped hospital trains increased, the need for dressings was no longer so urgent. A later development has been an arrangement for small wards at some of the rest stations, where bad cases could be brought from the trains and 48-hour cases from among the local troops could be treated.

In many ways rest-station duty is very trying, for the work is necessarily so unevenly divided. Times of rush come after the heavy fighting, when there is no respite by day or night. But workers like Miss Greg and her companions never spare them-

selves fatigue or effort. The only thing that matters is that no ambulance train should find them unprepared, no wound should suffer for want of fresh dressing, no cold, tired soldier should be disappointed of his hot drink. The rushes are followed by long periods when there is hardly enough work to fill the day, and the girls become conscious of the grim, draughty surroundings of the railway station, which form the entire horizon of their life. They have, however, found many other little ways of service, such as undertaking all the laundry arrangements for the sisters nursing permanently on the ambulance trains, starting a lending library, and doing "little things" for the soldiers on the leave trains. It is just in the doing of these "little things" that Red Cross workers, amongst whom Miss Greg and Miss Lyne are typical, are performing such valuable service. There is little excitement and no limelight in a life such as they lead, and it entails hard work at any hour of the day or night, whenever they may happen to be called upon. But their reward lies in the moments of cheer and brightness which they have been able to bring to so many thousands of suffering men, in that never-ending procession of pain ebbing away from the battlefields. Their kind ministrations have changed a dreary wait in a cold, dull station into an episode that soldiers who have passed through will remember with thankfulness—a moment of respite, bringing new courage, warmth, and comfort when all were sorely needed.

## XXIII

## MRS LEACH

In the summer of 1915 the Women's Legion, a war organisation started by Lady Londonderry, represented to the War Office that the services of women might be used in cooking for the troops. Various obvious advantages were connected with the suggestion. There was only a limited and insufficient number of men trained as Army cooks, and the introduction of women to do work which naturally falls within their sphere would thus release men for tasks which they alone are suited to undertake. It must also be a considerable gain to any troops to have their cooking managed by highly trained women able to devote their whole time to the work, rather than by men to whom this was only one of other military duties. As a result of these representations, permission was obtained in August 1915 for one hundred cooks to start work as an experiment in certain of the military convalescent camps.

Almost from the first the work at the camp where the largest number of women was employed was carried on under the personal management of Mrs Leach, who has been identified throughout with the movement. She is now in control of the great organisation of women cooks for the Army which has grown out of this tentative beginning.

*To face p.* 110.

After a six months' trial the success of the experiment was assured, and not only had vast savings of food been made, but these were combined with marked improvement in the standard of camp cookery. As a result of this initial success, by February 1916 the Women's Legion was asked to extend its work, and in the course of the year that followed the number of women employed in military cooking rose from the original hundred to over 7000. When it is realised that the cooking for 1000 men has to be done by a staff of only thirteen or fourteen women, including, besides actual cooks, kitchen helpers and waitresses, it will be readily admitted that their work is of an arduous nature. A difficulty might have been expected in finding a sufficient number of suitable women to respond to the ever-increasing demand. On the only occasion, however, when an advertisement was published asking for the services of 1000 women to undertake this hard and not particularly well-paid work, no less than 28,000 applications were received. This fact alone is a remarkable testimony to the patriotic way in which women have come forward during the war to offer to their country the services for which their particular training has fitted them.

The rapid development of this great organisation owes much to the powers of judgment, tact, and management displayed by Mrs Leach, for even in war conditions it is always hard to introduce innovations without friction. Mrs Leach has been helped in her work by her sister, Mrs Long, who has been responsible for much of the detailed administrative organisation. A large part of the office work, taking up of references and arrangements of posting, has

been carried out by Mrs Long, who has also supervised the issue of uniforms. Mrs Leach has been personally responsible throughout for the engagement of most of the cooks, and for their distribution. She inspects the cooking staffs from time to time, and all decisions for promotion go through her hands. A cook joining a camp staff in a subordinate position may rapidly rise to a post of head cook, one of considerable responsibility in these days. For, not only is the economical use of the country's food supplies a matter of national urgency, but the good or bad feeding of the individual soldier is admitted by all authorities to have a strongly marked effect on his fighting power and efficiency.

The satisfactory reports on the women cooks from officers' and men's messes throughout the country prove how well the work has been done. But the clearest tribute of success came when in February 1917 this branch of the Women's Legion, which had worked hitherto as a private organisation in co-operation with the War Office, became incorporated actually in the Army as part of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. The value of Mrs Leach's work was fully recognised, and she was asked to continue the management of the department under the new system. She is the first, however, to ascribe the real success of the work to the *esprit de corps*, the loyalty, and the patriotism of the women themselves, who have shown their capacity to carry on women's most time-honoured household duty under unexpected and increasingly important conditions.

## XXIV

## MRS GRAHAM JONES

THE work of Mrs Graham Jones, in charge of a Women's V.A.D. Motor Ambulance unit in France, is remarkable in that this unit was the first of its kind, and as a result of this successful experiment the employment of women as motor ambulance drivers for the British Army has been widely extended. Undoubtedly this success was mainly due to Mrs Graham Jones herself, and her good organisation and control of the contingent. Her record is typical of thousands of English girls of education and refinement who have come forward and given their services for work hitherto considered men's work, living hard lives under the strict Army discipline enforced for all workers in France.

In April 1916 the British Red Cross Society organised this motor unit to take over the entire work of a big base hospital in Northern France. Mrs Graham Jones, who was given the command, had had over six years' experience of motor driving, and had already driven an ambulance during the early part of the war. Working under her were thirteen girl drivers. The unit was attached to a hospital of 1800 beds, twenty miles away from the port to and from which the patients had to be conveyed. The ambulance cars were big and powerful, and the girls

had entire charge of them, not only for driving but for cleaning and all except heavy repairs. Mrs Graham Jones, writing of the work, says: "It included the unloading of hospital trains at our station, the transport of patients to the hospital ships, to convalescent camps, or to the base headquarters for return to duty; the conveyance of mails and stores, personnel, etc. It was always full of interest, but required at the same time careful driving and a steady, reliable head. The roads through the various camps were so new and so narrow, and the obstacles one met on them so varied in the way of teams of mules, Army lorries, marching platoons, or steam rollers, that there could be no relaxation of concentration."

When the heavy fighting on the Somme began, the hospital increased its accommodation, and the demand on motor transport was so continuous that the drivers were obliged to work in shifts of eight hours on and four hours off, to enable the work to be carried on night and day. During the rush the girls were driving as much as one hundred and thirty miles a day, but the care of the cars was never neglected, and it was the duty of the off-going driver always to leave her car ready for the road.

A V.A.D. officer inspecting the unit reported as follows: "At 5.30 a.m. we were awakened by an orderly reporting that a train would be in the local station in five minutes. In ten minutes the members were pouring out of the house to fetch their cars from the garage, and were at the station before unloading had begun. They drove very carefully, and we heard nothing but praise of them on all sides."

It needs little imagination to realise the demands such work makes both on mind and body; for a girl must have her full share of self-control and nerve to be able to drive a load of wounded men across twenty miles of difficult road at night as well as by day, when she knows what an error in driving might mean to them, and that the slightest want of care on her part might cause them unnecessary suffering. After the patients are safely deposited comes the hard work of cleaning and keeping the cars in order — a vital necessity for motor ambulances, for wounded men must not run the risk of delays on the road.

In January 1917 Mrs Graham Jones was mentioned in despatches for her devoted service and the success with which she had run her unit during many months. Not the least important of the principles which she instilled into her fellow-workers was strict and unquestioning obedience to Army discipline. She quickly realised that, in order to be of real help, one must fit into one's place in the great machine. It is because women have learnt during the war how important this question of discipline is, that they are being employed for the first time, and in ever-growing numbers, on active service. Nurses who, throughout their training, have always worked under strict rules adapt themselves naturally to war conditions, but for women who have never been accustomed to a disciplined life unquestioning obedience is far harder. Writing of women's service in France, Mrs Graham Jones says: "It is not that women would be afraid of danger: it is that after one has worked on active service for some time one feels so much that one wants to do work only where the work is wanted,

one just wants to help in ever so small a way just where the help is needed, and in no case where extra trouble or responsibility is thrown on those in authority." This is surely the essence of helpfulness, and this is the spirit in which Mrs Graham Jones and many others like her are working for their country to-day.

A MOTOR AMBULANCE DRIVER.

*To face p.* 116.

## XXV

## MISS GERTRUDE SHAW

WHEN in the spring of 1915 the cry for "shells and more shells" was answered by an almost miraculous development of munition factories, it was hardly contemplated what an immense share women would be able to take in the production of the output. It soon became apparent, however, that the national reserve of labour lay with them. In their tens of thousands women answered the appeal; in many cases leaving their homes to settle in munition areas where population was already congested, or where housing accommodation was on the smallest scale. To maintain the efficiency of these new industrial workers, it was clear that steps must be taken to secure suitable provision for food and shelter. The problem, indeed, soon became acute in some centres, and wide experiments for the protection of the women workers were made. That the results have been so good is due to the exertion of certain individual women of forceful character and of organising genius, and of these Miss Gertrude Shaw is an outstanding figure.

Trained from the outset of her life for the teaching profession, Miss Shaw rose to a headmistress-ship of a higher-grade girl's school at Leeds, and proceeded in 1913 to fill the post of responsible mistress at the Women's Institute, Woolwich. Besides her literary

and scientific qualifications, Miss Shaw had specialised in several domestic subjects, including laundry and cookery; she had also obtained the Royal Sanitary Institute's certificates as school nurse and health visitor. She was thus fully equipped for the task when the sudden war demand arose at Woolwich for the safeguarding of the health of women munition workers.

The first necessity was the provision of adequate meals in the vicinity of the works. This demand was at once met by voluntary effort, and it was under the leadership of Lady Henry Grosvenor that Miss Shaw entered the service of the Y.M.C.A. as superior of canteens. She was thus "in at the birth" of the first canteen for girl munition workers at the Arsenal, and subsequently became responsible for the staff, catering, and equipment of four mess-rooms.

The success of these canteens soon led to Miss Shaw's appointment to a wider sphere as lady superintendent of the newly erected Government colony at Coventry. This scheme embraces the housing and feeding of some 6000 girls and women, drawn from every part of the United Kingdom. A group of hostels has been built, each housing 100 girls, and each is under the direction of a competent matron. As lady superintendent Miss Shaw undertook the task of selection of all the matrons and their assistants, of the canteen managers and their subordinates; in all, a staff of some 300 persons. It must be recalled that in the organisation of the colony there was no precedent from which to take example, so each problem had to be met and solved as it arose. Miss Shaw's experience and tact has stood her in good stead, and it may be stated without qualification that

the colony has been an unexampled success. There have inevitably been difficulties as to the housing of girls from such different localities and varied stations in life that their habits, manners, speech at first presented awkward barriers; but the girls have been met in a spirit of confidence to which they could not fail to respond. Any religious problems have been entirely overcome by the careful selection of resident workers who represent the various denominations.

The canteen attached to the colony, where the girls from all the hostels take their meals, is a further triumph of far-sighted organisation. Lady cooks have been put in charge and labour-saving appliances introduced. It is no uncommon occurrence in the canteen to serve 2500 hungry workers with a hot meal within seven minutes of the sounding of the factory "buzzer" for the cessation of work.

In addition to this huge task, Miss Shaw has initiated many schemes for the recreation and education of her boarders. Classes in hospital work, fire drill, singing, dancing, and gymnastic exercises have been started, and are now most popular; occasional fancy-dress balls are encouraged, and games are taught. The result of these efforts is seen in the spirit of happiness pervading the colony and in the efficiency of the women workers in this group of factories, which surpasses the dreams of an optimist.

Miss Shaw, however, could not be spared to watch the results of her labour in Coventry, for, when she had established the colony in working order, her organising capacity was requisitioned for a still larger task. She is now inspecting and advising on canteens and hostels for the Ministry of Munitions all over the United Kingdom.

## XXVI

## MRS HARLEY

MRS HARLEY, sister of Field-Marshal Viscount French, commenced her nursing service at the beginning of the war, and was still carrying on fine work for the sick and suffering when she met her death in their cause on March 7, 1917. The shell which burst near Monastir has robbed the world of a noble and heroic lady.

In 1914 Mrs Harley went to France as administrator of the first unit sent out by the Scottish Women's Hospitals. She proceeded to establish a wonderful hospital in the historical Abbaye de Royaumont—"one of the most beautiful haunts of ancient peace in the world." Under the direction of Dr Frances Ivens, this hospital to-day is one of the finest and most complete in France, an important feature being the possession of a perfect X-ray installation, specially chosen by Madame Curie.

The work of the first Scottish unit was so successful that the French Government soon asked for a second, and Mrs Harley took over the administration, and went to Troyes to start a hospital there in May 1915. This hospital was known as the "Girton and Newnham Unit," the past and present students of those colleges having raised a large sum towards the equipment. The first hospital under

*To face p.* 120.

canvas to be used by the French, it received General Joffre's sanction as a French military hospital.

When later in the year the French Expeditionary Force was sent to Salonika, the military authorities requested that this unit of Scottish women should go with the expedition, and Mrs Harley again accompanied them as administrator. On arrival they were despatched to Gevgheli in Serbia, but had to retire in the Serbian retreat. They then established a hospital at Salonika, which is still open.

In July 1916 Mrs Harley came to England to take over a flying column of motor ambulances for service in the Salonika district. She returned to Serbia accompanied by Dr Agnes Bennett, who was in charge of the American unit of the Scottish Women's Hospitals, equipped with funds subscribed by supporters in America as a result of Miss Kathleen Burke's appeal. Mrs Harley's column consisted of a number of light ambulance lorries and two field kitchens. Its object was to facilitate the more speedy transport of wounded Serbians, whose sufferings were greatly increased by the shortage of motor ambulances. The column was sent to work near the Macedonian front, quite close to the firing-line. Writing home, Mrs Harley said: "Now to tell you of our first venture. A few days ago a British officer, just down from the front, came to tell me that the wounded Serbs were in great need of nourishment when they were carried down from the field, and asking if I would take up my motor kitchen and start a canteen for them. In a few hours all was arranged, and the next morning I started off. . . . We are fairly near the front and in hearing of the guns. It is sad seeing the poor men struggle in, and

it is good to be able to give them some help." A little later, Dr Bennett of the American unit wrote: "We are now engaged on very difficult work here, getting all the most serious cases direct from the dressing station; these we bring into hospital ourselves with the aid of Mrs Harley's flying column. This is very difficult and often very dangerous work, owing to the bad roads and heavy hill-climbing. Our women chauffeurs have done splendid service, and Mrs Harley's have been equally helpful. We have had a hard day, and many of the wounded are still lying out on the hillside awaiting transport, which is very scarce." It must have been a strange enough sight in the midst of the lonely, barren mountain country, and along the rough, precipitous roads, to come upon a van of the Scottish Women's Hospitals driven by a sunburnt girl of the unit bringing her load of Serbian wounded, collected with danger and difficulty, down to the safety of the hospital.

In January 1917 Mrs Harley turned her energies to helping the population of Serbian civilian refugees at Monastir, who were in dire need of food and medical assistance. She also established an orphanage at Monastir, where she collected more than eighty children, and looked after them at her own expense. It was when engaged on her errand of mercy that Mrs Harley met her death. She was wounded in the head by a shell splinter, during one of the periodical Bulgarian bombardments of Monastir—an open town—at the moment when she was actually distributing food to starving Serbians in front of her house.

The touching scenes at Mrs Harley's funeral are evidence of the esteem and gratitude with which she was regarded in Serbia. She was buried at Salonika

with full military honours, and her coffin, covered with the Union Jack, was followed by a great concourse, which included a large proportion of Serbians. In the funeral oration pronounced over her grave, the Serbian Minister of the Interior said: "Noble daughter of a great nation, though not a sister of ours by birth, still dear to us as a true sister, your tender soul is followed and ever will be followed by our fervent prayers, and by the everlasting gratitude of the Serbian nation. Thanks and glory be to you." That her spirit and courage live on is manifest in the declaration by one of her two daughters, both engaged in hospital work in Serbia, that after her mother's funeral it was her intention to return to Monastir to carry on Mrs Harley's work.

As a recognition of her services to the French, Mrs Harley was decorated by General Sarrail with the "Croix de Guerre with palm leaves"—one of the highest of French decorations.

## XXVII

## MISS ETHEL ROLFE AND THE WOMEN ACETYLENE WELDERS

In the autumn of 1915 the organisers of the Women's Service Bureau, anxious to assist women who applied to them for help and advice in obtaining posts under the newly constituted Ministry of Munitions, immediately sought openings in which educated women with a natural bent towards machinery and mechanical work could receive instruction in a skilled process. After consideration, it was decided to arrange a training in the process of oxy-acetylene welding, a work which seemed to combine various advantages. It was a skilled process comparatively new in England, and one which women had hitherto had no opportunity of learning, and should they be successful in taking up the work, there would be plenty of scope for them, as the process was being increasingly used in aeroplane manufacture. For this reason there was a good chance of its being continued after the war, and not proving a blind alley like so much present-day work. Accordingly, a small school was established under an able and experienced metal-worker, Miss F. C. Woodward.

The process taught is almost entirely used in aeroplane construction, namely, the welding of sockets and joints, struts, levers, and the parts of the frame-

ACETYLENE WELDERS.

To face p. 125

work. Even before the war there had been a shortage of trained welders, and, with the enormous increase in aeroplane work and the enlistment of so many skilled mechanics, the demand for such workers was enormously increased.

The school was opened in September 1915, and by December the first girls were sufficiently trained to take posts in a factory, the controller of which had been interested in the project, and had helped the school at its start in setting up the necessary plant. The pioneer women welders have been followed by a steady stream; and such has been the success of the training that no welder has any difficulty in obtaining employment as soon as she leaves the school. From this small training centre alone over 150 welders have already passed into various works.

The process is generally recognised as the speediest and most effective way of securing a perfect weld without any deleterious effect upon the metal, and consists in employing the flame produced by the combustion, in a suitable blow-pipe, of oxygen and acetylene. The temperature of the flame at the apex is about 6300 degrees Fahrenheit, and it is by this means that the metals to be welded together are brought to a suitable heat. The worker's eyes have to be protected from the powerful light by special goggles, and they also have to wear caps over their hair, and leather aprons. The work is fascinating, even to the onlooker, and absorbing to anyone with craftsman's instincts. It involves considerable responsibility, and the welder needs to be conscientious and careful in the extreme, as upon the efficiency of her work, if used for aircraft

construction, depends the stability of the machine and, consequently, the life of the airman.

The women welders have not established their position without difficulty, faced as they were from the start with the fact that men engaged on precisely the same work, with no greater output, were yet receiving considerably higher wages. By first banding themselves together in a Trade Union, and by bringing the question up for arbitration as to whether their work was skilled or unskilled—the decision being given in their favour,—the women welders have achieved equal recognition with men, and that without having recourse to strikes and dislocation of national work in war-time.

A typical worker among the learners of this new craft for women is Miss Ethel Rolfe. One of the first women to enter the school, after a short course of training she took a post in an aircraft factory, where she was the only woman welder. She worked with one man welder, and sometimes when work was slack, owing to the supply of parts being hung up, she did brazing, which she learnt from the men with whom she worked. She also did fitting, rather than stand idle; and as much overtime was being worked, she could help on all three processes when occasion required.

In December 1916, after a good deal of practical experience, Miss Rolfe accepted a post in a Government department. In this capacity she visited aeroplane works all over the country, spending from three to ten days in the shops, studying the work done by women, and that done by men which women might take over. She reported to her department on the detailed organisation of women's work, on the

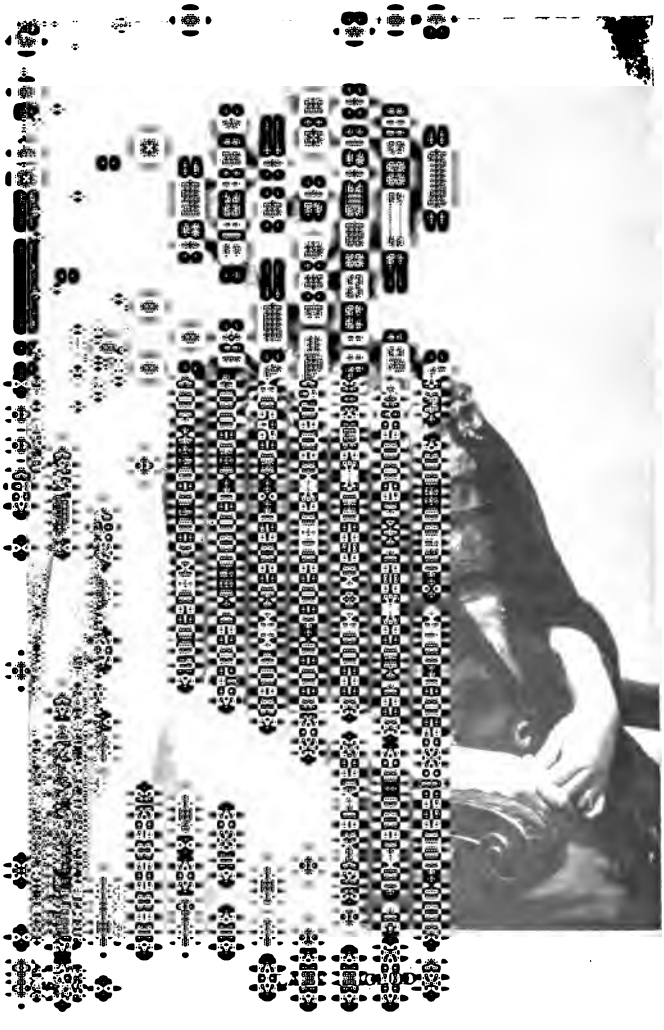
methods of training, and the possibility of further dilution of men's work in each firm by the employment of more female labour. To do this she had to inquire into technical processes, machines, and workshop arrangements. She specially urged the increased employment of women in fitting and sheet-metal work, wood-work, and welding, and in some cases on the erection of aeroplanes and the installation of the engine.

After continuing this work for some months, she was promoted and transferred to the Production Department. She now inspects aeroplane firms and reports to her department with a view to an ever-increasing output, chiefly obtainable by greater efficiency in the labour of women, improved arrangements in the shops and in the methods of teaching and supervision. This unique opportunity of studying the types of machines and methods of construction, coupled with the help of resident inspecting engineers, has given her an amount of technical knowledge which, with her personal experience of factory conditions, has helped her in the work of selecting suitable operations for female labour.

Before the war, Miss Rolfe had no previous mechanical or scientific training; she had always regretted the lack of opportunity which women found in the industrial world, and especially in engineering trades.

Another pupil of the welding school, Miss Margaret Godsall, who became charge-hand at an aircraft factory, has recently died from inflammatory rheumatism. She contracted this illness as a result of staying on at the factory during a rush of urgent

work, though she was suffering from influenza. This is a pathetic example of the keenness and the self-sacrifice with which girls are throwing themselves into their tasks, and their service to the country will always be remembered as one of the finest records of the war.



*To face p. 129.*

## XXVIII

## LADY LUGARD AND THE WAR REFUGEES COMMITTEE

In her work for the great population of Belgian refugees, who came over to England in the first months of war, Lady Lugard has helped to carry out one of the highest missions to suffering humanity. Quick to grasp the significance of the German advance through Belgium, Lady Lugard, in the first week of war, turned her thoughts to the plight of the unfortunate women and children driven from their ruined homes with nothing left to them save life itself. Where were they to go, and what was to become of them? Obviously England offered the only safe refuge.

Lady Lugard knew of the complete and detailed arrangements which had been worked out during the summer of 1914 for the reception of refugees from Ulster, in the event of the anticipation of civil war being realised. Understanding the importance of rapid action and the value of a good organisation, Lady Lugard asked the help of the Ulster leaders, who willingly placed their machinery at the disposal of workers in such a worthy cause. After enlisting the support of Cardinal Bourne and the leaders of the

Roman Catholic Church, and having obtained the consent and advice both of the Foreign Office and of the Belgian authorities, Lady Lugard, with the help of Mrs Alfred Lyttelton, formed a committee. But there was little time for deliberation or arrangement before she and her helpers were rushed into action. Warned on one day that a shipload of possibly a thousand refugees might be with them on the next, they had immediately to arrange offices, raise funds, and prepare accommodation. Mr Norrie-Miller, the manager of the General Accident Fire and Life Assurance Corporation, placed offices at the committee's disposal free of charge, and secured the nucleus of a clerical staff. The organisation decided to be known as the War Refugees Committee. Its non-political and non-sectarian character was marked by the fact that Lord Hugh Cecil became chairman and Lord Gladstone treasurer, while the Roman Catholic and Jewish Churches were represented among its members. Lady Lugard and Mrs Lyttelton at once proceeded to issue an appeal through the newspapers. The response was overwhelming. All England was burning with admiration and pride at the great part which Belgium was playing. Throughout the country, from homes humble and great, rich and poor, money and offers of help flowed in on such a scale that, even with the best endeavours, it took many days before they could be acknowledged and classified. Eagerness to help the victims whose suffering was part of the price Belgium had to pay in her fight for honour was England's tribute of admiration.

The next question was the momentous one of temporary accommodation for the refugees on arrival.

With the assistance of an ever-increasing group of willing volunteer workers, the War Refugees Committee soon arranged for beds and food to be prepared in the buildings placed at their disposal. These were hastily improvised as hostels, with the help of generous loans of linen and crockery. If the accommodation at first was sketchy, there were at least beds and food for all who came, and eager sympathy and welcome.

They needed all the help and comfort which could be given to them, these dazed and terrified people, with the haunted look of horror on their faces. They had endured experiences which our civilisation could have ascribed only to a bygone age, and which we little thought could pollute the earth again.

During the next weeks the stream of refugees flowed into London in ever greater numbers. The work of the War Refugees Committee soon classified itself automatically into departments. The clerical department had to cope with correspondence which, within a fortnight, had mounted to many thousands of letters a day containing money contributions and placing accommodation for 100,000 people at the disposal of the committee. Refugees had to be received on arrival and temporarily housed. The question then arose of their allocation to more permanent quarters and of arranging that offers of hospitality from all over the country should be responded to by suitable allotment of refugees. From the first it was found advisable to decentralise as much as possible and to allow the local committees formed throughout the country to make most of the detailed arrangements for allocation. These committees numbered before long between two and three

thousand. Questions of transport and clothing were in the hands of other rapidly organised departments.

Every day the number of refugees increased, and members of the committee worked almost without rest day and night. In the first week of September a Government invitation was published offering refuge in England to the Belgian civilian population. The magnitude of the task thus became beyond the management of a group of private individuals, and the committee was relieved of a certain amount of anxiety by the provision of refuges on a big scale in London at Government expense. Though the work was now extended and receiving Government assistance, it was to the War Refugees Committee, which about this time was placed by mutual consent under the general direction of Lord Gladstone, that the authorities turned to carry on the great task. The committee has continued to work throughout in close co-operation with the Government Departments, particularly the Local Government Board. Large buildings, such as the Alexandra Palace and the Earl's Court Exhibition Buildings, were taken over and prepared for the reception of the refugees, serving as clearing-houses whence they could be sent on to the provinces, where arrangements for hospitality were made both by local communities and by private individuals. The staff of voluntary helpers in London soon reached 500, who threw themselves with undaunted energy and devotion into the task which Lady Lugard herself has described as "the consolation of a nation by a nation."

In all her personal intercourse with the Belgian refugees, especially of the working class, Lady

Lugard has said that what struck her most was their pathetic fortitude and the way in which in their hour of desperate need they clung to their religion. Chapels and oratories were rapidly established wherever Belgians were received, and the Roman Catholic Church and community worked unremittingly to comfort and console them. "I don't know how many thousand rosaries I distributed in those days," said Lady Lugard afterwards; "wherever I went the Belgians seemed to clamour for them above everything." It should also be mentioned that the Jewish community in London took a very active part in helping their co-religionists among the refugees.

From September till Christmas 1914 the flow of refugees continued—the fall of Antwerp in October bringing a tremendous rush of work amid surging crowds. On one day in October the number of refugees handled by the Committee amounted to 6621. By February 1915 their arrival in anything like large numbers had practically ceased; but other problems sprang up. It became obvious that the war was to last longer than the few months which optimists of the early days prophesied. It was therefore decided, after considerable hesitation, that it was better, both in their own interests and in those of the community at large, that the Belgians, who had lived almost entirely as guests, should be allowed to work and to become gradually self-supporting.

In the two years which have elapsed, the working-class people who formed the bulk of the refugees, while giving still some occasion for pre-occupation and expense to their own and to the British Governments, have become practically absorbed. In the

ever-increasing demand for labour, the Belgians, who are known to be among the best craftsmen and labourers in Europe, have found a ready market for their work.

There has remained the comparatively small number of refugees of a different class, unaccustomed to earn their own living, but rendered destitute as the poorest artisans by the devastation of their country. The great initial work accomplished, Lady Lugard and the many others who had by this time become absorbed in the work of consolation turned to making suitable provision for this group, which included families of high social position, artists and professionals in many spheres of work, men and women suddenly snatched from circumstances of prosperity and ease and confronted with the problems of bare existence. To assist these unfortunate people Lady Lugard organised a small hospitality committee. She and her helpers proceeded to arrange a system in London, and similar arrangements have been evolved on private initiative in the great centres in the provinces. In London large houses were placed one by one at the committee's disposal, and social groups of Belgian families were established in them. In these hostels, family life is as far as possible reproduced, questions of education, health, and clothing receive special care and attention, and the attempt has been made to classify the houses in such a way as to bring friends and potential friends into the same circles. The results have been most satisfactory. The domestic management is undertaken in each house by a competent manager, sometimes Belgian, sometimes English, appointed by Lady Lugard's committee. Many of the managers are lady volunteers,

who give the whole of their time to the promotion of happiness and comfort in what one of the guests has described as "ces petits coins de Belgique." The one rule of the committee is to try and make the Belgians happy. If their lives are necessarily restricted and limited by circumstances, these Belgian guests are at anyrate living in quiet resting-places, recovering, it is hoped, from the shock of their experiences, educating their children, and meanwhile possessing their souls in patience till the day of their country's liberation.

The numbers in which the Belgian population took refuge in England from first to last have been so great, and the rush in the beginning so bewildering, that it would have been impossible to carry out a work of necessity hastily improvised without mistakes and difficulties. Lady Lugard is the first to admit how far the schemes fell short of the perfection which she had hoped to achieve. But when the story of this flight of a nation is told, history will remember, not the misunderstandings, the mistakes in detail, or the want of foresight, which seem inevitable in all human undertakings, but the way in which the English people opened their arms in welcome to the Belgians, and their desire to comfort and to heal. To Lady Lugard personally must be ascribed full recognition for a truly great service. By her promptitude, her imagination and her unsparing gifts of energy and devotion she stands out amongst the throng of splendid volunteers in the service of Belgium.

## XXIX

## MISS CHRISTOBEL ELLIS

SINCE the early days of the war, the aspect of our streets has undergone many changes; but there is no more certain sign of the times than the sight of women in khaki uniforms and military badges driving Army motors and lorries. Though these enterprising women excited surprise some months ago, they are fast becoming as numerous as men drivers.

The women drivers of the Army are under the management of a department of the Women's Legion, and form a part of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps. At the head of the motor branch is Miss Christobel Ellis, who has in her hands the development of a great new scope of activity and usefulness for women workers. Miss Ellis, already an experienced motorist, offered her services to the French Red Cross in September 1914, and for some months she drove for them, and also for the British Red Cross Society, in France. During the days of the battle of the Marne and the heavy fighting near Paris, the shortage of ambulances and drivers was so great that Miss Ellis sometimes drove for twenty hours at a stretch. At the end of 1914 she went to Serbia, where she managed the commissariat, store-keeping, and military returns for a group of five Red

*To face p.* 136.

Cross hospitals for over a year, till the final torrent of invasion swept over that unhappy country.

On Miss Ellis's return to England she found that the demand for trained motor-drivers and mechanics was fast outpacing the supply. Her own successful experience of motor work under the roughest conditions had taught her how well the services of women might be used to supplement men, especially in England, with the advantages of good roads and help in difficulties usually to be had close at hand. Miss Ellis discussed her ideas with Lady Londonderry, who had organised the Women's Legion for war service, and as a result of their representations they were given permission to supply twenty women drivers as an experiment, to take up work under the War Office in May 1916.

The great value of women's employment in motor work lies in the fact that the men whom they are releasing are precisely the most valuable class of workers—namely, trained mechanics, of whom there is an all too limited supply, which can only be augmented by the slow process of training others. Much of the work which the women drivers are undertaking is work upon which highly skilled men were wasted; driving cars, for instance, for staff officers involves many empty hours simply spent in waiting. The women's reception by the men whose work they are taking over has been generous in the extreme. No trouble has been spared to help the girls in every possible way, and to assist them to maintain the high standard of Army efficiency.

The girl drivers work long hours, for they have to be on duty by 8 a.m. and often do not put their cars away till late at night; but they stand the strain of

the life wonderfully well, and in spite of the bitter cold of last winter there were few who dropped from the ranks.

It cannot, of course, be maintained that the women's mechanical knowledge equals that of some of the men they are replacing, but the standard of care of their engines and cars increases with their experience, and their capacity and skill in driving are undoubted.

Besides motor-driving there are other branches of women's work under the same department. There are corps of women despatch-riders—motor-bicyclists whose services are proving most valuable. Women are also taking over the charge of Army mechanical stores. This is responsible work which requires great accuracy, for if incorrect supplies are handed out, endless delay may be caused to the convoys. In the delicate and intricate work of assembling aeroplane engines, women also working under this department are proving more and more efficient. The numbers of women employed in this dilution of men's labour will soon reach many thousands, and the way in which they have succeeded in overcoming considerable prejudice against their employment in the Army is in itself testimony to their efficiency.

To Miss Ellis belongs the recognition due to a woman who has been able to give personal proof of women's capacity in a comparatively new field.

## XXX

## MADAME BRUNOT AND MISS MARION MOLE

THE experiences of Madame Brunot and her sister, Miss Mole, who lived at Cambrai for over two years under German rule, provide an example of patient and unselfish work, carried on in the most trying circumstances with splendid courage and devotion. Madame Brunot is of English birth, married to a Frenchman resident in Cambrai. On the outbreak of war she telegraphed to her sister, Miss Mole, to come and help her in an ambulance station which she was establishing in her house, affiliated to the Union des Femmes de France. Miss Mole left for Cambrai at once, arriving on August 13, 1914. There followed a few days of suspense during which the French and English armies were retreating day by day nearer to Paris, and then, on August 26, the German army poured through Cambrai. A battle raged in the streets in front of Madame Brunot's house and in the trenches behind her garden. Beds for twenty-two had been prepared, but in a very short time fifty wounded were picked up and laid on mattresses provided by people of the quarter. While Miss Mole was tending the wounded whom the French and German soldiers dragged inside their gates, Madame Brunot went out under fire with her

man-servant to rescue a French soldier who had been overlooked. The first dressings were done at once, but not until late at night was even a German doctor available. The next day the worst cases were sent to the civil hospital for operation, and then returned to the ambulance station to be cared for. During the following days and nights work was incessant, but after a fortnight all the wounded were transported as prisoners to Germany and the ambulance station practically closed. Miss Mole then went to one of the big hospitals in the town and was allowed to work for a time in the English wards, where she described the men as being "in an incredible state of neglect." She was afterwards asked to take over the case of an Irish officer said to be dying of tetanus. By courageously begging some serum from the German authorities, in spite of a hostile reception, and then by her devoted nursing, she won the officer back to life, and was able to set him on the road to health before he was transported to Germany for internment. Madame Brunot, meanwhile, had been doing all she could for the English wounded in the hospitals, visiting them constantly with gifts of fruit, eggs, milk, and puddings, and all the time doing her utmost to be allowed to reopen her ambulance station. In October 1914 the German permission was obtained. Madame Brunot and Miss Mole were therefore able to continue their nursing till the Germans again closed the ambulance station in March 1915. During these months the work was terribly hard, for the staff was shorthanded and the patients were practically helpless, being mostly cases of paralysis or men with amputated limbs. Miss Mole narrowly escaped losing her arm from blood-

poisoning, contracted while dressing a very septic case. It was only after several operations and six months of painful and anxious treatment that Miss Mole recovered the use of her arm. After the closing of the ambulance station for the second time, the sisters did all they could for the English and French prisoners in Cambrai, arranging to send them food, gifts, and messages by every means they could devise.

Early in 1916 they took up this work for the prisoners in a more organised way, working under the Mairie of the town, and using their house as a depôt for garments and food. "Being very short of money," wrote Miss Mole, "I also gave lessons in English, by which means I was able to buy bread. This meant self-denial on the part of the people who sold it to me, as we were all on bread rations. Food was very scarce, and without the American *ravitaillement* we should certainly have starved."

As time went on life grew increasingly difficult, and the German *régime* became daily more severe. Many of their friends were arrested, some evacuated from their houses, and others sent as hostages to Germany. In November 1916 Madame Brunot and Miss Mole were turned out of their house, and were thankful to take refuge in a tiny dwelling half shattered by aeroplane bombs. At last, all hope of further service being gone, they applied to join a train of refugees, and were allowed to leave Cambrai in December 1916.

No women could have worked harder than these sisters during more than two years for the wounded, the prisoners, the desolate and poor of the forlorn city—cooking, sewing, giving without thought for themselves, uttering no complaints, forgetting their

own need in the bitter need around them. A terrible journey home, preceded by the inevitable internment in Germany, might have seemed the finishing stroke; but, undaunted by all they have seen and suffered, the sisters have gathered their courage to build up life afresh, and to restore something of all that was so suddenly crushed for them and for thousands more, in the world-wide disaster of the war.

## XXXI

## SOME ARMY NURSES

THE noble host of Army nurses contains few names which are known to the general public; but for those who scan the *Gazette* with care there stand out women whose deeds swell the ever-lengthening list of heroines, not only by shining acts of gallantry but by month after month of patient, devoted work. The wonderful Army Medical organisation has covered a vast field, and the endeavour has been throughout the war that in any place, in any region, where sick and wounded soldiers are likely to be congregated, there should always be a supply of nurses to minister to them. Soldiers removed from the battlefield are handed over from the ambulances directly to nurses, and are never from that time onwards, whether in trains, ships, or hospitals, at home, in France, or in the remotest of the battle zones, away from the care of trained nurses.

The short accounts of work which follow have been received from typical nurses, who, following the traditions of their service, specially ask to remain anonymous.

The first type of hospital nearest to the battlefield where nurses are allowed to work is the casualty clearing station. An idea of the work can be gained from a sentence in a nurse's letter home: "Fights in

the air are very common, but we are so busy we rarely have time to look." The casualty clearing stations have frequently been under bombardment, and bomb-dropping from aeroplanes is so usual an occurrence as to be hardly worth mentioning. Among the many reports of nurses under shell fire is that of a staff nurse who, "although knocked down by the explosion of a shell, resumed her work until all the patients were evacuated." Another nursing sister was present in the operating theatre when it was wrecked by the explosion of a 15-inch shell, which wounded her. In spite of her wound she remained at work for five hours, and displayed great courage in continuing to attend to patients."

The following is a description by a nurse of the casualty clearing station work: "We were usually very full of patients—at one time convoys every other day, besides a constant stream in small numbers. Eighty-eight patients passed through the ward I was in in one day, leaving us fifty at night. If the fifty beds were full, the stretchers were placed on trestles until sometimes it was most difficult to move. We had a very good system with the new cases. Perhaps fifty would come in at once. They were got into bed, undressed, washed, and fed. The medical officer went round and looked at all the wounds. If he decided they were to be evacuated, red labels were placed on the bed-rail if they were to go by train lying, blue labels if they were to go sitting, and white labels if they must go by barge. Those for immediate operation had one with 'Theatre' written on, pinned on the outer blanket, so that we could tell at a glance what to do for each."

Another nurse writes: "When I think of these

boys being carried in wounded, ay, wounded almost beyond all recognition, but smiling bravely to the last, it makes one feel proud to be British. As our Padre said, we did God's own work up there."

The nurses on the hospital trains have a fine record of service. Though less monotonous than the life in a stationary hospital, it is a curious existence to be living permanently in a train, continually travelling to and fro on one stretch of line, nursing in cramped quarters and under particularly tiring conditions. Three nurses recently received the Military Medal "for conspicuous bravery under fire, on No. 27 Ambulance Train." The train was carrying a full load of nearly five hundred sick and wounded away by night from a town in the vicinity of the Somme front, when an aeroplane attack began. Five bombs fell in the immediate neighbourhood of the train. The windows were smashed and the lights went out. The train gave a heave which threw some of the patients out of their cots. One of the sisters is reported to have called out to the men in her coach: "Now, be quiet and good, boys, till I light a lamp." This she managed to do, and the men declared that her hand never trembled. The commanding officer reports that "the sisters went about their work coolly, collectedly, and cheerfully, and that by their magnificent conduct they not only allayed alarm among the helpless patients and those suffering from shell shock, but caused both patients and personnel to play up to the standard which they set."

Wonderful work, too, has been done by the nurses in the hospital ships in conditions of ever-increasing danger. "We landed 1800 wounded yesterday morn-

ing," writes a hospital ship sister on the cross-Channel service. "It was a wonderful experience . . . nearly nine hundred were on the decks and steerage with broken arms, etc. All the eighty-four in my ward were stretcher cases. . . . The work was terrific." There is now an all too long list of nurses who have suffered shipwreck at the hands of the enemy, while some have lost their lives. When a great ship was recently torpedoed in the Mediterranean the nurses had a narrow escape. One of them has described her experience in the open boat as follows: "Our safety lay in keeping as far from the ship as possible, heavy seas making the pull to land out of the question. The huge swell increased the fear for the safety of our boat, as we were sitting waist-deep in water. Baling was of no use; the harder we baled, the quicker we filled. A cry from the back of the boat caused all eyes to turn in time to see the ship first list to port side, then turn and take a long, straight dip beneath the waves. The sea was wilder and rougher than ever, and three gigantic waves in succession completely swamped our small boat, and all that was left to us now was to cling to the ropes in the boat and to each other." Eventually, however, the nurses were rescued just in time by a destroyer. Such experiences are no longer rare adventures—they are the hourly anticipation of all workers who serve in hospital ships, since the Germans have ceased to regard the badge of the Red Cross as a sacred and inviolable symbol.

A description is given elsewhere in this book of work in a typical base hospital. If comparisons are possible, perhaps the most unselfish of all hospital work is that which falls to the lot of those sisters and

nurses whose duty is the care of the sick and wounded German prisoners. To have to expend their energy and devotion on Germans is unwelcome work for any Englishwomen to-day, but the spirit in which these nurses accept their difficult task is well illustrated by the following account from a sister who is in charge of a ward of German prisoners in a great military hospital in London. She says: "The German prisoner of war in hospital in England comes on the whole as a pleasant surprise, though a nurse gets an unpleasant shock when she is detailed for duty amongst the prisoners. For several months I have been in charge of a large number of wounded Germans, and I find them on the whole quite good patients. At first their cleanliness and habits are not all that can be desired, neither do they bear pain well. But they give very little trouble, and are extremely grateful for what is done for them. They are very observant, and make themselves quite useful as soon as they are able to get about. They are of great assistance to the nurses in carrying round screens, wheeling dressing-trollies, etc. Perhaps the most striking thing about them is the almost womanly care which, without exception, they give to a comrade more sick than themselves. As patients much may be said in their favour, and the work amongst them is a wonderful experience." No better proof could be given of how the true nurse's instinct dominates her entire work; her care for her patients, and, above all, her appreciation of their good qualities, overcoming her natural and instinctive prejudice.

To the nurses of the war, it will be admitted by all, belongs the crown of women's war service. Their

ranks contain many heroines whose names and deeds will never be chronicled; but their selfless devotion, their courage, their unquestioning acceptance of any risk, and their willing sacrifice of personal comfort, health, even life itself, will stand for all time in the proudest memorials of these tragic years.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY NEILL AND CO., LTD., EDINBURGH.

D 639 .W7 .M27 C.1
Women of the war,
Stanford University Libraries
3 6105 035 765 077

D
639
.W7.M27

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

JUN 8 1995
F/S JUN 20 1995
DOC FEB 08 1996
JUL 22 1996
AUG 02 2001
JUL 01 2002
MAY 1 2002
AUG 05 2002
JUN 01 1999
APR 22 2003
FEB 11 2003